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IN DEFENSE OF SOLZHENITSYN

JOHN GARVEY

ABOUT SOME THINGS SOLZHENITSYN IS DOWNRIGHT WRONG, BUT HIS CRITICS ARE WRONG ABOUT EVEN MORE—NAMELY, THE MAIN POINT OF HIS MESSAGE.

FROM THE OTHER SHORE: POPE PAUL & AMERICA

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

AN AGENDA FOR THE NEXT POPE

RICHARD P. McBRIEN

CHARLES DAVIS

LEONARD SWIDLER

PAUL H. CONNOLLY ABOR
THOMAS POWERS THE U.S
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NEWS & VIEWS

Pope Paul VI

Looking back, I don't believe Pope Paul VI ever had much standing with "our crowd."

I remember arriving midway through Session 2 of Vatican II and inquiring of "our crowd" about papal audiences. The question was a joke. Papal audiences were for tourists. Besides, Paul wasn't John, and the action was in the *aula*. You didn't go to a sandlot game in the Bronx when the Yankees were at the Stadium.

This attitude infected me for a while. When I finally did take myself to an audience, I went alone, quietly. I had a feeling almost of slinking off.

How much "our crowd" changed over the years, I'm not sure. The surface impression is that for many of them not much. Paul was an easy pawn, sometimes, to be sure, of his own making. And, of course, he blew the birth-control issue. There was no redemption after *Humanae Vitae*.

Social encyclicals more advanced than John's (Note how deep the roots of liberation theology are in *Populorum Progressio.*); travels worldwide; ecumenical breakthroughs; extensive structural and liturgical reforms; imaginative adjustments to the realities of Eastern European Communism (Recall the Mindszenty affair?)—this and more would not win the hearts of "our crowd."

To be fair to my colleagues, Paul was often his own worst enemy, and alas, he deserved much of the press that he received, particularly around the time of *Humanae Vitae*.

Humanae Vitae was a gaffe, no doubt about it. It was a brave and honest gesture, as Clifford Longley wrote in *The Times* of London on Paul's death, but, as he added, it was likewise an unprecedented misjudgment of vast consequences.

Indeed. As John Courtney Murray reportedly observed, Paul reached much too far on much too little knowledge.

Andrew Greeley's studies confirm all too painfully the consequences on American Catholicism.

All that notwithstanding, I think history will deal much more gently with Paul than "our crowd" did during much of his pontificate.

Paul's was a no-win situation. He had to fill shoes that he, along with the rest of the world, knew were unfillable. And he had to give order to change in a Church where change was a stranger. Complicating his task was a secular world in radical flux.

Of course *Humanae Vitae* undercut papal and ecclesial authority. Of course *Humanae Vitae* drove many Catholics to unorthodoxies previously unthinkable. But the times took their toll too. The Catholic Church doesn't exist in a cultural or political vacuum. There was no way that it was going to evolve on its own terms, at its own rate of speed, when the world around it was changing so drastically on many of the same issues that confronted Catholicism, including sexual morality, feminism and social justice.

John saw something of what was coming and Vatican II was his response. Paul's challenge was to see Vatican II to a Johannine conclusion—which he did; then to guide the Church through the currents of change with a minimum of seasickness. Well, there was a lot of seasickness, but I'm not sure that it would have been much better with a lot of other men as pope.

This, I think, is why history will give Paul a passed. He made the best of an impossible situation.

Paul could have been an unmitigated disaster, you know. He could have acceeded to the strong conservative elements in the Church —the Ottavianis, the Lefebvres—and run the Church aground on the rocks of 19th-century reactionaryism. Or he could have accommodated the expectations of the liberals—the bulk of them at least—and the Church would likely have exploded from the uncontrolled interplay of forces suddenly let loose within it.

Paul's was a middle way —sometimes ambiguous, always cautious; now positive, now negative. It was a policy that alienated people across the ideological spectrum, but it probably kept the Church in one piece, however eventually frayed.

Many of Paul's decisions will be altered or completely reversed by succeeding popes, beginning with the new one, and I expect he lived uncomfortably with the knowledge. Our children will see married priests; our grandchildren, women priests —maybe. Most assuredly, they'll see sexual codes refined so that what is now dogmatically unacceptable will one day be acceptable.

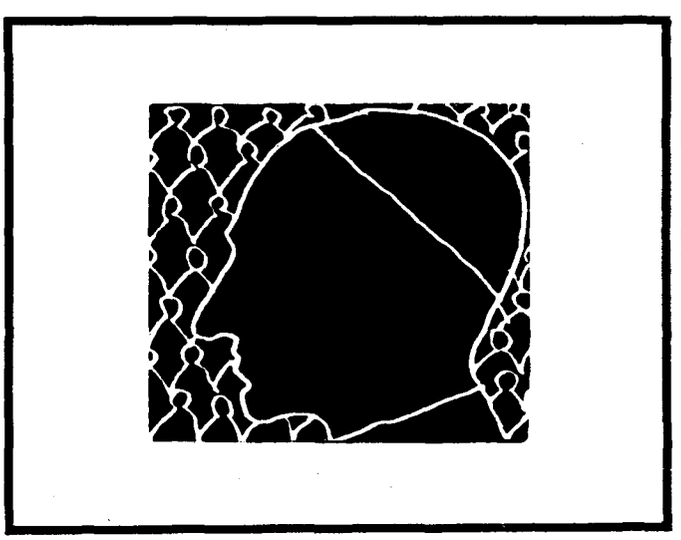
The latter development will make it easier for many Catholics to be Catholic in an orthodox sense, but it is not going to return the Church to what it was. *Humanae Vitae* guarantees that, again by the damage done authority, but no less significantly by the impetus it supplied within Catholicism to the principle of private judgment, as understood in its Protestant (as distinct from Catholic) sense. The day of instinctive obedience to authority is gone. It's a whole new situation in Roman Catholicism where conscience is concerned.

I suspect Pope Paul knew this, and it was another reason why he wore his anguish like a maniple. He hadn't set the Church on any new course, but paradoxically, he was bequeathing a different type of Catholic to history. He could not have found the idea congenial.

"Our crowd," on the other hand, has generally found this same thought quite congenial. The liberated conscience, informed and disposed to act responsibly, has always been a grand liberal concept. Thus the further paradox that "our crowd" actually is in debt to Paul in a way that many don't yet realize. He freed the Catholic conscience from its state of reflex obedience. It wasn't what he intended, but there conscience is nonetheless: Free. This is no small legacy.

Classify this happenstance, if you will, under "S"—for serendipity. Crossfile under "G"—for *gratias*.

R.I.P. JOHN DEEDY



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CORRESPONDENCE

Humanae Vitae

Hicksville, N.Y.

To the Editors: Isn't what Father Curran is objecting to, the debate between the professional theologians and the hierarchy on *Humanae Vitae*, the very same process he finds so praiseworthy in the debate on separation of church and state? ("Ten Years Later," July 7) It took time, patience, and education for Europeans to understand our Constitution and pluralism, while Americans were hardly aware of what the Popes condemned as "modernism" and Ralf Dahrendorf describes as the German heritage of Prussian state authoritarianism. (*Society and Democracy in Germany.*)

Is the Encyclical really the primary cause of the decline in Roman Catholic practice in the U.S.? Does the insistent, ubiquitous propaganda of Planned Parenthood and Zero Population Growth play no part? Obviously the Pope and his advisers miss it! What of the parallel decline in Catholic schooling, when never before in our history have more children been isolated in school for more of the day, more of the year, and more of their formative years? Mary Jo Bane recently termed school a "massive intrusion" in the life of the child, but surely in the life of the family as well.

It seems to me the theologians should lower the volume to "advise and consent" to the teaching magisterium of the hierarchy. Not only would it be a good example for the laity (sure to be included in Vatican III, as the "experts" were at Vatican II) but the hierarchy is a more "credible communicator" for the average Catholic than Herr Professor of Theology. It's that elusive "Faith"—in Christ, of course, and HIS choice of Peter the Rock.

(MRS.) MARY H. HIGGINS

St. Bonaventure, N.Y.

To the Editors: Father Charles E. Curran [July 7] still sounds like a haughty

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TEST-TUBE BABIES

Louise Brown may have been the first human to make the cover of *Time* before she was even born. The remarkable facts of her conception, in a laboratory dish containing her mother's surgically removed egg and her father's sperm, followed by reimplantation in Mrs. Brown's uterus, provoked cries of "Miracle!" as well as worried invocations of Huxley's *Brave New World*. Thinking about "test-tube babies" seems to fall into three categories:

The anathema response: The entire innovation is morally unthinkable. It is a gross, depersonalizing interference in the "natural" reproductive process. It places risks on a yet-to-be-born person which demand a consent that obviously can never be given. It inevitably involves the foreseeable rejection of fertilized ova, or even the calculated abortion of defective fetuses. In sum, it stands in a line of technological horrors, from gas chambers to nuclear weaponry, and it points directly toward the genetic engineering and assembly-line breeding of Huxley's dystopia.

The assimilation response: Neither the end nor the means involved in "test-tube babies" are drastic departures. The goal is an ancient one: for childless couples to have offspring. The means are but an extension of the human interventions we already accept—in fact, celebrate—when nature proves harsh or recalcitrant. The conception and development of new human life is already regulated or assured by contraception, fertility drugs, amniocentesis, artificial life-support systems and dramatic surgery for the prematurely born. Artificial insemination has been employed for decades

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without any of the drastic consequences sometimes predicted and now conjured up in connection with *in vitro* fertilization and embryo transfer. As for the inevitable failures and abortions, these too have their counterparts in nature: numerous zygotes fail to implant themselves and defective fetuses are often spontaneously rejected. Genetic manipulation, the use of surrogate mothers, or the total extra-corporeal and extra-familial creation of human individuals are dangers that ought to be faced on their own terms, and not forestalled at the expense of those who could benefit now from medical advances.

The apprehension response: The fact that there are precedents for "test-tube" conception is not reassuring. It demonstrates, instead, the power of science and technology to move us willy-nilly into difficulties we have not demonstrated the will or the skill to resolve. Procreation has been loosened just that much more—and rather decisively—from the knot of personal determinants, sexual intimacy, and marital relations in which it has been bound. If artificial insemination allowed the substitution of a donor's sperm for the father's, now *in vitro* fertilization allows the substitution of a donor's egg for the mother's, and reimplantation further allows the substitution of a donor's womb. The possibilities of moral and social mischief are multiplied. The logic of replaceable parts moves reproduction another step toward the morality of manufacture. Though one may hesitate to term the loss of a fertilized egg the size of this dot (.) an abortion, there is little reason to think that the manufacturing principles of quality control can halt there. Mrs. Brown, after all, was required to agree in writing that she would abort any fetus found to be defective, and no one has inquired as to what period of pregnancy or to what degree of defect such an agreement extended. However the medical-moral theory of consent might be applied at this stage of life, the idea behind that theory is to prevent the person from being treated as an object, as a "product." Which is exactly what the method of create-and-discard-the-failures threatens to do. Finally, the new techniques consume precious medical resources—scarce human skills as well as money. The promise they dangle before most women with blocked fallopian tubes but without wealth is a false one. Meanwhile the priorities of medicine are further distorted, and attention is diverted from the need to find parents by adoption for millions of already living children.

Of these three responses, the first is simply too naive about "nature" or too negative toward human control. It is unrealistic about the risks that all life imposes—without consent. It is too certain about abortion at the very first stages of development, and too ready to cast scientific or technological developments as dangerous steps on a slippery slope.

Where the first response is dogmatic, the second is deluding. To justify today's developments because they are not much different from yesterday's is truly to pile ambiguity upon ambiguity, to construct a morality on sand. The pattern is clear when defenders of *in vitro* fertilization and reimplantation dismiss concerns about the loss of nascent life by pointing out that abortion is widespread anyway. If the new techniques can be assimilated to traditional human desires and medical aims, the assimilation also works in reverse. Thus Donald Chalkley of the National Institutes of Health is quoted as saying, in justification of the failures inherent in the new methods: "When a husband and wife go to the bedroom and experiment, the experiment will fail two-thirds of the time." Well, that is one way of characterizing what husbands and wives are doing, perhaps a thought-provoking way, but in the end hardly satisfactory.

So we are of the apprehension party. Our apprehension is deepened by the way in which this historic step came about. Despite long-standing controversy over *in vitro* fertilization and reimplantation, the decision to proceed was entirely in the hands of two interested researchers and a willing couple. There was no groundwork of primate experimentation. Not even the unfortunate trade in publicity surrounding young Louise has revealed many scientific and ethical aspects of the case. *Time* magazine noted "the furious scientific competition between rival fertility researchers," and national rivalry waits in the wings—American researchers have bemoaned the fact that HEW's ethics guidelines kept America from being first with a test-tube baby. All this in the wake of a debate over recombinant DNA that revealed how skin-deep was the scientific community's willingness to entertain any degree of public control. We have discovered how to control the most delicate processes of life but not how to control the processes of discovery.

To be apprehensive is not merely to occupy some middle of the road, worrying aloud while doing nothing. Calls for "public discussion" are not enough. Ethical reservations about *in vitro* fertilization have appeared in medical journals for eight years but talk is cheap when there are still no sanctions against, and many incentives for, scientific *faits accomplis*. The proper step now is to maintain HEW's moratorium on *in vitro* fertilization experiments and to broaden it with legislative and professional restrictions. *Then* let the researchers argue their case. And please, without the cant about Galileo and the Dark Ages. Science is the established church of our era, and every survey shows the public retaining great confidence in its powers. The momentum remains with science and medicine. It is only common sense that the burden of proof should rest on those who would continue with test-tube procreation.

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ONLY THE PRESS RECALLS OUR OBLIGATIONS

DAMN THE REFUGEES & FULL SPEED AHEAD

We've been reading about the boatpeople for nearly a year and a half now, those Vietnamese and Cambodians who would rather risk the South China Sea in small fishing craft than stay where they are. You often see their pictures on page four or five of the *New York Times*: desperate, emaciated people crowded together. For awhile I wondered why they always seemed to be looking up into the camera, thin arms reaching up, until the obvious answer struck me: the photographer happened to be there when they were picked up at sea, and naturally he was looking down at them as they were helped up from their open boats. I'd been looking at those pictures for 18 months before another question slowly nagged its way to the surface of my mind. Can you guess what it is?

The general problem is simple enough: they're making omelets in Southeast Asia, and those who would rather escape than be broken have no place to go. In the beginning there were only a few hundred a month, then a thousand or more, now as many as 4,500 a month, straining the refugee services of the United Nations, cramming the camps in Thailand, Maylasia, Singapore, Japan and the other countries of Southeast Asia. At present there are at least 100,000, according to the *Times* stories of Henry Kamm, who won an exceptionally well-deserved Pulitzer Prize this spring for his persistence in reporting their plight.

Nobody wants the refugees, and while the United States has been tentatively arranging to take in 5,000 now, 8,000 later on, 10,000 more down the road, we have been moving slowly from apparent fear we might have to accept them all in the end. The other unwilling hosts have been putting pressure on us by tightening their borders, sometimes even pushing boatloads of refugees back out to sea. The freighters which cross their paths often ignore their distress signals for fear they will never get rid of the refugees once they're aboard. Filipino and Japanese captains aren't happy about this brutal necessity, violating the oldest of the laws of seafaring, but shipowners have left them no choice.

The inevitable result is that a lot of the boatpeople don't make it. They starve, die of exposure, capsize and drown. There's no way of knowing how many reach safe harbor, but the survivors' stories have led observers to guess that maybe half of the total simply disappear. That's 4,500 a month, men, women and children of all ages. Odds are, a lot of boatpeople are scanning the horizon right now, or have given up, after watching so many freighters calmly steam by, while the crewmen lean over the rail until the captain shoos them back to work. It seems a hard fate for people who have suffered so much, and then risked everything for a life where they won't have to go into the omelet. When you think of them out there, you can't help wishing somebody would go out and pick them up.

Think back: in all those stories of harrowing voyages and last-minute rescues, do you remember a single boatload of refugees being picked up by the United States Navy? I can't remember one. It seems strange, doesn't it? The United States is still the world's greatest naval power. At any given moment we have literally hundreds of ships steaming about in the Pacific on training maneuvers of one kind or another. Freighters of every registry from Panama to Liberia have either picked up boatpeople, or passed them by, but the U.S. Navy has sighted nary a one. This singular fact can have only one explanation: the Navy has been explicitly ordered to steer well away, and for 18 months the White House, the Pentagon and the Navy have probably been wondering when some journalist was going to start asking questions.

It's not hard to figure out what must have happened here. The Carter Administration is finding it difficult to get congressional authorization for large numbers of additional refugees, and the boatpeople are only a part of the whole. Thousands of others have crossed into Thailand from Cambodia and Laos. The Thais have been pressured into accepting them by promises from the United States and elsewhere that homes would eventually be found for them. If the U.S. Navy began picking up four or five thousand boatpeople a month the rest would be dumped permanently in Thailand, which would doubtless close its borders unless the U.S. went further and promised to take them as well. On top of that, Cambodia and Vietnam could be expected to make an international fuss if the U.S. Navy were cruising their waters on the lookout for refugees, and a lot of Americans would protest, not just those alarmed by an influx of nonwhites into the United States, but organized labor arguing it's tough enough for citizens to find jobs as it is, and perhaps people on the left claiming that anyone trying to escape the omelet must be a rightist reactionary and former war profiteer. There's no question the Navy could pick up the best part of the boatpeople, if it put its heart into the effort, but there's also very little doubt that such a program would precipitate a bruising political struggle. The only real question in this matter is whether counsels of prudence ought to take precedence over compassion.

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The problem is not a small one. If word ever got back to Vietnam that the U.S. Navy would pick up refugees at sea there would probably be a run for the boats. In the end a policy of rescue and open admission might mean the acceptance of three or four hundred thousand Indochinese refugees, in addition to the estimated 175,000 already in the United States, most of whom escaped in 1975 when the American-backed governments of Cambodia and South Vietnam finally collapsed. That's a lot of people, but not more than the half million Cubans admitted as refugees since 1959, and it would be hard to argue that the United States owes less to the Indochinese than it did to the Cubans.

Moral Responsibility

Few debts have been so well-documented. The United States supported the reassertion of French sovereignty over Indochina in 1945, at a time when Ho Chi Minh was in almost complete control of the country. The United States insisted on a "temporary" division of the country when the French negotiated their departure at Geneva in 1954, and Saigon's governments were heavily —in the end completely—dependent on American support during the following 21 years. The Communists had no inalienable right to rule Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, but when we supported their opponents for so long, propping them up after they would have collapsed on their own, we acquired a certain moral responsibility for their fate, and an obligation to do for the losers what we might.

But that is general and abstract. The refugees are particular people, and a great many of them literally worked for the Americans, or are wives, children and parents of those who did. Frank Snepp's book about the confused evacuation in April, 1975, *Decent Interval*, documents in detail the inadequacy of American efforts to save those who had trusted us. Just before the last American helicopter took off from the roof of the U.S. Embassy, American military officers had promised thousands of Vietnamese in the Embassy compound they would not be forgotten. They were still standing in patient queues, luggage in their hands, when the Marines ran for the Embassy, bolted the doors behind them, and raced up the stairs for the final flight out of the country.

This is not an argument that the wrong side won the war, only that moral obligations incurred during the war did not end with the fighting. Hanoi, in fact, seems more sensitive to this point than we. The collapse of South Vietnam's economy and the imposition of North Vietnamese control inevitably meant hardship, and while thousands of military officers and government officials are still in "reeducation" camps three years after the end of the war, separated from their families and sometimes press-ganged into dangerous work like mine-clearing, the aftermath has been far gentler than the bloodbath predicted by Ford and Kissinger. Other revolutions have been consolidated more cruelly, most notably in Cambodia.

But the process has been harsh enough in Vietnam all the same, and those who want to leave, and risk their lives to do so, deserve something better from us than the observation that life is hard. China has negotiated for the orderly departure of thousands of Chinese who used to be the backbone of South Vietnamese commercial life, while we have largely abandoned those who still choose us to the luck of the open sea. There is no good reason why the Carter administration cannot change its approach even at this late date. An airlift was arranged with Castro to handle the departure of Cuban refugees, and Carter might propose the same to Hanoi. Hanoi might not like it, but they would probably like it better, in the end, than having the U.S. Navy picking up refugees with all the publicity which would inevitably follow. The only motive lacking for such a shift in policy seems to be the absence of broad public feeling.

Oddly enough, it is the daily press which seems to be paying most attention to this situation. The magazines of opinion all seem to be thinking of other things. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, to a lesser extent, probably because it does not have so many fulltime correspondents in the Far East, have regularly published stories on the subject. Their only failure has been a tendency to focus on the plight of the refugees themselves, while ignoring the reasons at home for Washington's sluggish response. Some determined questions about the American failure to do anything whatever for the refugees in the worst situation—those actually at sea in flimsy boats, ignored by freighters unhappy enough to spot them—might stir the administration to action. I suspect the story would balloon quickly. There must be government officials and Navy officers restive with the orders to steer clear of the problem, and once reporters nosed them out, and it became clear how much we *could* do, inactivity would be hard to explain away. It's a pretty cold-blooded policy, when you think of it.

But so far it's been the old story where America and Vietnam are concerned. When the cause was all but hopeless, and Vietnam should have been left to itself, we were all meddlesome eagerness to stave off the near-inevitable. Money and blood were not too much to wager on a long shot whose odds we were too headlong even to calculate. And now, when a small effort might have a large result, we are tired, pre-occupied and indifferent. We know they're out there. I suppose it's a sign of our spiritual exhaustion that we haven't even thought to ask why we can't be bothered to pick them up.

THOMAS POWERS

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WHAT ARE THE MEDICAL SCHOOLS UP TO?

ABORTIONS AND ADMISSIONS

On February 24, 1977, Senator Richard Schweiker (R-Pa.) introduced into the United States Senate a bill (S.784) "To provide for unbiased consideration of applicants to medical schools." Specifically, the bill stipulated that henceforth federally supported medical schools would be prohibited from questioning, verbally or in writing, "any individual who is applying for admission . . . about such individual's views regarding abortion or sterilization." Moreover, the bill added, medical schools may not "deny admission or otherwise discriminate against any applicant for study because of the candidate's refusal to . . . in any way participate in the performance of abortion or other medical services contrary to his religious beliefs or moral convictions."

What prompted Senator Schweiker to introduce this measure? Following the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision of January 22, 1973, there were a growing number of anecdotal and hearsay reports of admission interviews at which applicants felt there was an obvious and prejudicial antipathy, on the part of some interviewers, to any expression of anti-abortion opinions. Dr. Eugene Diamond, a Chicago physician who ultimately surveyed American medical schools on this question, admits that at first complaints of discrimination were met with "skepticism." Admission to medical school is intensely competitive, and the question arose: "Were the complaints . . . merely attempts to rationalize failure in a bitterly disappointed, highly achieving student?"

As reports of bias persisted, however, the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds decided that the allegations deserved investigation. A questionnaire was prepared to survey the admission practices of all medical schools, and it was the results of that survey, published by Dr. Diamond in the February 1976 issue of *Linacre Quarterly*, which provoked Senator Schweiker's concern and the resultant bill.

According to Dr. Diamond, questionnaires were sent to 108 medical schools. Of the 60 respondents, two surprised the investigators by admitting frankly: Yes, "a stated refusal to participate in abortion and/or sterilization procedures [would] be considered a negative factor in an applicant." (The candor of that response, surmised Dr. Diamond, "reflects a viewpoint within some segments of the medical profession that this issue has been finally settled by the Supreme Court decision and that continuing debate is largely irrelevant." Even the Supreme Court has learned, however, that it cannot silence lawful dissent by closing legal debate.)

Such open discrimination was unexpected. Also disturbing, though less surprising, was the indication by two-thirds of the medical schools that applicants were likely to be questioned as to their position on abortion, and the frank acknowledgment by one-quarter of the schools that a student's refusal to participate in abortion procedures would "create administrative problems." That last phrase does not sound particularly ominous, if you presume that some inconvenience is a small price to pay for religious freedom. But orthodox Jews and other Saturday sabbath observers know that few employers willingly inconvenience themselves in any way. Given a plethora of qualified candidates, medical schools are no more likely to voluntarily welcome "administrative problems."

On November 4 of last year, therefore, the Senate approved the substance of Schweiker's bill as an amendment to another bill (S.2159). But one month later House conferees rejected Schweiker's amendment and, by way of compromise, ordered Secretary Joseph Califano and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to study the extent and incidence of discrimination in order to determine the need for legislation. It was but a short while later when Senator Schweiker urged those concerned about discrimination to make their views or experiences known to Secretary Califano and himself. "I fear the kind of report which might be written," he stated, "if those affected don't come forward. Without case histories like those I've seen in the past year, HEW could cover up the whole problem."

The HEW study, originally due March 1, 1978, has suffered bureaucratic delay which still continues. As of mid-March, the Health Resources Administration of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare had only presented Congress with an *outline* of its proposed study of medical school discrimination: a letter would be sent to all the medical schools in the United States; a notice would be included in the Federal Register, explaining how complaints might be filed; pro-life groups across the country would be contacted; and there would be a follow-up at the medical schools regarding students' complaints. The process could hang fire indefinitely.

Meanwhile, pre-medical students can anticipate that questions regarding abortion will continue to be a routine part of the interviewing process and that some doctors will continue to regard pro-life attitudes as "unprofessional." Almost all medical schools report that they try to elicit ethical opinions during interviews, and their justification for this is the need to determine the ethical sensitivity and moral character of future

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doctors. Certainly, we need righteous doctors, and schools should consider not only grade point averages and standardized test scores but also an individual's apparent sense of justice, integrity and compassion; schools must discriminate, though not on racial, religious, or sexual grounds. The problem is that once the answer to an ethical question passes beyond analytic interpretation into value judgment—as it must if action is to result from discussion—the issue becomes: whose criteria are correct?

Hypothetically, abortion raises questions which should allow a student to show his ability to interpret and analyze ethical problems. Realistically, many students fear discussion of this issue, and they develop a pat evasion—the first step toward compromising moral principle and character. They may, for example, review the arguments but avoid taking a position, or they may state their personal views while insisting they would never impose them on others. Both strategies have served politicians well, and politics, as George Orwell remarked, is the defense of the indefensible.

Why are students inhibited by the abortion question but not by such other controversial topics as euthanasia, fetal experimentation, or genetic engineering? The answer is not that bright students are incapable of reciting the law or summarizing opposing viewpoints. Rather, the anxiety stems from a clear recognition that admission to medical school is intensely competitive; that abortion is a loaded question, on which the medical profession itself is sharply, even bitterly, divided; and that members of an admission committee are no more immune from bias or prejudice than other mortals.

Senator Schweiker's conclusion, therefore, is that "It is not enough to ask these schools not to discriminate, because with one hundred applicants for every medical school opening, a reason can always be found to reject any application." The same conclusion was reached by Dr. Diamond, after analyzing the results of his survey. Given the fact that many doctors "hold and profess deep and emotionally charged feelings on these hotly debated topics," the discussion of such topics in pre-admission interviews represents, argued Diamond, "a potential jeopardy to an otherwise highly qualified candidate in an exquisitely competitive situation."

A larger question is raised by this issue, and that is whether doctors should be granted a proprietary interest in medical ethics. Many individuals would confidently entrust their lives into a doctor's hands but see no reason why he should be allowed to operate on their consciences. A surgical scalpel can deftly excise an appendix, but no diploma prepares a doctor to employ Occam's razor on anyone's ethics, removing whatever the doctor finds inconsistent with a healthy life. Doctors are human, at best—and at worst—and if a society allows its conscience to be put under ether, it's going to find that some of its parts are missing in the morning.

One undergraduate, admitted to one of the nation's best medical schools, was recently asked why he thought schools interviewed applicants on the abortion issue, and he casually remarked that he thought they might be trying "to weed out zealots." It sounds reasonable enough, until one realizes that one man's faith is another man's fantasy, and what seems righteously zealous to one person is hysterically fanatical to another. Weeding out zealots is usually a thin euphemism for silencing those who disagree with you, and as the determination to keep church and state separate in this country threatens to become a crusade to prohibit moral principle from serving as the legitimate basis for any law, the zeal of the secularists grows loud.

Indicative of this zeal is the fact that whenever the issue of abortion arises these days some latter-day Titus Oates is quick to detect another Popish Plot. Senator Schweiker, though neither Catholic nor conservative, insists that the identification of the anti-abortion movement as exclusively right-wing and Catholic is "a gross distortion of the political realities," and in introducing his bill to prevent medical school discrimination, he emphasized that "there are many people of all faiths on each side of the question. . . . This is not a question of pro-life or pro-choice. It is a question of freedom of conscience, of whether we will allow some occupations to be closed to people because of their sincerely held moral beliefs."

For the present, the House of Representatives hesitates while HEW investigates, and no end to the question is in sight. PAUL H. CONNOLLY

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POPPIES

ROY SCHEELE

The light in them stands as clear as water
drawn from a well.
When the breeze moves across them, they totter.
You half expect them to spill.

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IN DEFENSE OF SOLZHENITSYN

JOHN GARVEY

Dismissing him as conservative or 'mystical' is like whistling in the graveyard

"In the face of what he has to say," Alfred Kazin wrote of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in a recent issue of *Esquire*, "we should be more terrified than we are." It is not necessary to agree entirely with Solzhenitsyn to know that he speaks with an authority which his own history has forced on him, an authority which comes from the effort to speak clearly in a bad time. He must be taken seriously—the suffering to which he is a witness demands at least that much respect. For this reason, the generally easy dismissal of Solzhenitsyn's remarks to Harvard's recent graduates is a disturbing thing.

What did Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn say at Harvard? If you believe the press reports, he condemned freedom and happiness, opposed a free press, and suggested that almost any sort of authoritarian government is superior to democracy. Most liberal commentators professed to find the performance a bit dull, standard reactionary rhetoric; and replies to Solzhenitsyn ranged from Rosalynn Carter's silly proof that the West is not spiritually sick after all, as he had claimed (people do volunteer work in hospitals, she pointed out), to Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s little instruction to Solzhenitsyn in the *Washington Post*: "He must understand the irrelevance of his grand vision to a democratic and libertarian society." Schlesinger was especially troubled by Solzhenitsyn's "mysticism," and the *New York Times* worried editorially that Solzhenitsyn "believes himself to be in possession of The Truth."

You don't have to agree with the whole of Solzhenitsyn's speech to find this quick dismissal curious. Is Solzhenitsyn's commencement address really just standard conservative rhetoric? I don't think it is at all. As wrong as I believe him to be in some particulars, his essential point—that the West is spiritually sick and suffers from a profound loss of will—seems to me correct. Many of his critics are, I think, unwilling to face in a more honorable and straightforward fashion the dangers he points out.

What *did* he say? What he said was not, granted, an encouraging view of the West. Solzhenitsyn said that the current split between the Communist bloc and liberal democracy can't be solved by pragmatic liberalism's "enlightened self-interest." Western society is limited by an individualism which sees legal limits as the only ones, a vision which emphasizes rights at the expense of duties. As a consequence, we do not use our freedom responsibly. Since the Renaissance, the West has been in a spiritual decline; it has proclaimed an unreal autonomy, the freedom of human beings from any force higher or greater than human will. Because of this unreal vision, we are likely victims for an enemy with a more collected and focused sense of the way the world works.

To charge that this is simply the usual conservative line is a kind of whistling in the graveyard. Solzhenitsyn is as hard on simple-minded conservatives as he is on simple-minded liberals. On colonialism, for example, Solzhenitsyn is hardly a mourner for the *ancien regime*. The West took its colonies "not only without anticipating any real resistance, but also usually despising the conquered peoples and denying any possible value in their approach to life." The 20th century collapse of colonial establishments has revealed the fragility and arrogance of this viewpoint, he believes, and he goes on to challenge the idea that the planet should imitate

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Western economic and political structures. These viewpoints are not the standard conservative ones, nor would many conservatives agree with Solzhenitsyn's assertion that "the constant desire to have still more things and a still better life, and the struggle to attain them, imprints many Western faces with worry and even depression, though it is customary to conceal such feelings. Active and tense competition permeates all human thoughts without opening the way to free spiritual development." Where there is no higher obligation, where legality is the highest goal and nothing else is required, people are encouraged to operate "at the extreme limit of the legal frames. . . . An oil company is legally blameless when it purchases an invention for a new type of energy in order to prevent its use. A food-product manufacturer is legally blameless when he poisons his product to make it last longer; after all, people are free not to buy it."

It is not that there is nothing wrong with the Harvard address. Solzhenitsyn sees America's defeat in Vietnam as a bad thing, and he places responsibility for the Cambodian genocide at the feet of the antiwar movement. This view is downright wrong, but Solzhenitsyn is, even here, close to a nerve which must be exposed. It may in fact be true that defeat in Vietnam has, in strategic terms, made us vulnerable. It is even more important to point out that it was not for moral reasons that we entered Vietnam, and it was not for moral reasons—but rather out of a kind of boredom—that we left it. (Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s, criticism of Solzhenitsyn on Vietnam is especially hard to take. It was not reactionary Russian Orthodoxy but rather Schlesinger's idol, the liberal and pragmatic Kennedy, who got us into Vietnam up to our necks, and the old New Dealer Johnson who shoved us in over our heads. Schlesinger, with the understandable delicacy of a liberal who once talked differently, refers to Vietnam as an example of "excess," as if what happened there had to do with high spirits, or depression, or enthusiasm wrongly placed. It may be unkind to recall this episode in the history of American liberalism, but it would be stupid to forget it.)

When critics of Solzhenitsyn's speech have paid attention to the fact that what he has to say is as far from standard conservative opinion as it is from liberalism, they tend to call Solzhenitsyn a slavophile, the latest prophet of the brilliant but flawed tradition which saw some hope for universal salvation in the superior insight of the unspoiled Russian soul. The reduction of Solzhenitsyn's thought to simple nationalism was refuted two years ago by John Lukacs's essay, "The Meaning of Solzhenitsyn" in *Commonweal*; but the argument remains impressive to those who depend on their readers' ignorance of the slavophiles, and to all of those who don't want to face the complications involved in understanding what Solzhenitsyn is really saying.

What he is saying is that in losing its spiritual bearings, a society "which is based on the letter of the law and never reaches any higher is scarcely taking advantage of the high level of human possibilities. . . . And it will simply be impossible to survive the trials of this threatening century with only the support of a legalistic structure." It is this emphasis on the spiritual, the insistence that there is something higher and more important than those things our system has canonized, which disturbs Solzhenitsyn's critics; and this emphasis is the heart of his message.

The unexamined assumption in Solzhenitsyn's speech is one which goes to the center of every debate about the relationship of power and righteousness. It involves a tie which he apparently believes should exist between a good way of living, a true and moral appreciation of human duty, and government. Is it the job of the state to ensure a morally decent life through mechanisms which are, at base, coercive? In one way or another every society does this, but democratic nations have done this by proscribing as limited an area of behavior as possible. Rather than enforce a positive ideal, liberal democracy has preferred to limit its enforceable morality to the absolutely necessary ingredients for living together—an assumption that murder, rape, theft, and violations of written contracts are to be punished, with almost everything else left to the individual. No religion or philosophy is to be pushed at the expense of others, under our system; and we remember, with proper caution, the ugly results of attempting to enshrine one ideal by punishing any dissident political or religious views.

The ideal may be admirable, but Solzhenitsyn is not impressed with its fruits. Perhaps this benign and tolerant view of human possibility is in fact not enough to build a civilization on. (It might work, if we had an appreciation of the tragic; but it seems to be the West which is least capable of entertaining the idea of real good or real evil, in this century of all centuries; and liberals usually blush at the word "evil," preferring words like "mistake" and "excess.") If Solzhenitsyn seems at moments to exhibit selective indignation, we should give him the grace we offer victims of the Nazis; his claim that we face a unique evil is understandable, given the fact that he has looked at one of hell's other faces, no less Satanic because it comes under more fashionable auspices. His perceptions are indeed limited by his being Russian, and by his having gone through a particular agony and not the general kind you sympathize with from a distance. (For all that Russian particularity, I wonder how many of Solzhenitsyn's critics have read Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* in recent years, and how many of them could have failed to think of our sixties.)

Along with rejecting the idea of an enforceable ideal way of living, liberal democracy has recently, in practice, rejected anything higher than a toleration of nearly

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everything that doesn't leave blood on the walls. In his essay on Solzhenitsyn, John Lukacs wrote of "the dissolution of habitual civilization." When democracy itself becomes sufficient, when it is not grounded in a deeper sense of what we expect of people, and feel obliged to give to them, we are building a house on air. It should in practice be possible to see democracy as a major negative insight into human character: we are safer from tyranny when no one person or group can claim a right to all the power. When this toleration of a number of competing ideas becomes itself an ideology—when we find ourselves saying that all ideas are equal, that Plato and Tom Snyder are in there competing for public attention, everything notional and marketable, or valueless—when we get to this point, we have a new and dangerous thing going.

I was invited recently to speak to a university class, and at one point in the discussion (which was about values and culture) I suggested that there might be a

need for solitude and reflection before anything like "a value" could be formed . . . otherwise we are in danger of being sold something, something in the air, something of value to a ruling class; but whatever it may be it would be, without a depth deeper than its use to someone, too shallow to sustain a common life. A student objected that I seemed to be saying that some ideas and values are better than others. I agreed with her—I do think some ideas are better than others. She was genuinely surprised: "You don't really mean that," she said.

I try to live a removed life and may be naive, but encountering the belief that all ideas are *really equal* (as opposed to the belief that no idea may be forced down another's throat short of a direct threat to survival, and then for no reason more noble than the minimal human desire to keep breathing)—this was something of a shock. Then one professor teaching the class joined the argument. "You say that all ideas are not equal—that's the kind of thinking that gave us the crusades and the inquisition." He knew I was Catholic and I guess expected me to spring to the defense of ecclesiastically sponsored atrocity. The man was without irony. He meant what he said, the way Anita Bryant means things. I asked him to consider the distinction between believing an idea to be right, and forcing it on others. He didn't do this . . . in fact, it seemed he couldn't . . . and when I asked him whether he didn't really think in his heart of hearts that Hitler's ideas were really inferior to Socrates' ideas, he waffled! He really wouldn't admit to that! There are people with the vote who think this way.

A similar short-circuit seems to have happened in the minds of people who can't see that when Solzhenitsyn says what he says about press freedom—that it has been used carelessly—he is not therefore calling for censorship; and when he says that freedom is not the highest human possibility it does not mean that he is calling for more authoritarianism (this is an obscene interpretation of the words of a man who has suffered so much from authoritarianism), any more than his concern for spirituality is a desire for theocracy. He is rather trying to put the stretching of the human will into its place, and suggest—with the authority suffering has given him every right to suggest—that human will has its limits.

Remember that the *New York Times* worries that Solzhenitsyn thinks he is in possession of the truth (I suppose they are secure in thinking that they are not) and that Schlesinger uses mysticism as a bad word. I am afraid that he means by mysticism the whole dimension of the spiritual—the belief that the spiritual realm is really the dominant one, and that other realms, in a proper view of things, are to be judged in its light.

What Solzhenitsyn says about the West is not a peculiar Russian discomfort. What he says about the Western sickness is also apparent to other suffering people. In the May issue of the radical Evangelical magazine *Sojourners* an exiled Ugandan Protestant minister, F. Kepa Sempangi, offers his impressions of our society's will, its sense of what matters: "Hannah Arendt has written that Western education removes conviction. The relations between Uganda and the Western world since Amin has come to power give great weight to this claim." Sempagni points to the fact that despite all the condemnations the U.S. and Britain and other Western powers have squeezed out, they continue to do business with Amin, and business isn't suffering at all. The U.S. helps Amin's military; imports and exports are jolly at both ends; and the very week Britain condemned the murder of Dora Bloch, a plane loaded with whiskey left Britain for Uganda. Sempangi writes, "A high ranking army officer who recently escaped from Uganda told me that nothing keeps Amin in hysterical laughter longer than the ideological repudiations uttered by the West. After the English broke diplomatic relations, he asked, 'Is there any less whiskey in the parlor?' "

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THE POPE & THE AMERICAN MIND

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

A view from the other shore

It is one of the sad, and peculiar, images of modern history that, in the popular understanding of the papacy, the Vatican has become not just a fortress or a museum, but rather a prison, and the papacy itself—which should be the most liberating of divine-human institutions—seems a medieval iron maiden, or a ball and chain which the poor prisoner drags across the floor of his papal apartment to the window where he will summon from his agony a smile, from his worried mind a warning, and from his heart a blessing for the crowd below in Saint Peter's Square.

It is the loneliness-of-power, burdens-of-office syndrome—one encouraged by recent American Presidents (though not John F. Kennedy), political leaders, movie stars, famous writers and some European royalty in a natural desire to be loved and "understood" by their publics as well as held responsible for their power. All this in spite of the fact that the public usually wants its public figures to enjoy their power and their stardom, to live out as freely as they can the proper embodiment of what it means to be President of the United States, Prince of Wales, Ernest Hemingway, Roy Rogers or the primary living representative of Jesus Christ.

Yet, who thinks of the Pope as a free, individual human being? Rather, he has become primarily a concept—once a man, now a symbol hoisted up on a *sedia gestatoria* to be carried on the shoulders of other men so crowds may see and cheer him; this when a mind as keen and politically learned as his must know that in the second half of the twentieth century men carrying another man in a chair is a symbol of imperialism, or that when triumphant soccer players or politicians hoist their hero-comrades on their shoulders part of the symbol and joy is the physical contact with the human being. But today's dominant imaginative preoccupation with the papacy seems to have been with the need to liberate the man who might be Pope from the institution of the papacy itself. If this were not so, the image of John XXIII—a man who, I have been told by a Council *peritus* who met them both, was actually less warm and personally concerned in individual encounters than Paul VI—could never have electrified the world the way he did.

When a *Commonweal* symposium, eight years ago [May 1, 1970], asked nine American church leaders "If you could make one change in the Church, what would it be?," the most dramatic—and, to some minds outlandish—replies came from Chicago's social-activist Monsignor John J. Egan and Harvard theologian Harvey Cox, and both confronted the problem of the papacy. They seem outlandish now because so many thoughtful people, either through disillusionment or cynicism, have given up any hope that the style of the papacy might radically change. Indeed, the question itself was posed before the bottom fell out of the "revolutions" of the 1960s, before the full impact of the post-Vatican II conservative backlash, and when liberal Catholics were more willing to believe Church authorities might act on their suggestions. Meanwhile, change in papal style remains the stuff of melodramatic fantasy—like Morris West's novel-film *The Shoes of the Fisherman* where the Anthony Quinn peasant-Pope climactically announces he will get rid of his wealth, or the recent Malachi Martin novel, *The Final Conclave,* where a young African cardinal makes an eleventh-hour plea for Vatican property to be put in an international, non-denominational lay trust fund, thus freeing the Pope to preach the Gospel, and so gets himself elected Pope.

Thus, Harvey Cox's fantasy wherein the Vatican and the World Council of Churches issue a joint encyclical, *Lucrum Salax*, in which they begin "forthwith to divest themselves of all earthly possessions" to give them to the poor, might be sniffed at as naive; and Jack Egan's idea that the Pope should hit the road, literally become

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a pilgrim moving from country to country every few months—like Jesus and Paul, a leader with no place to lay his head—seems equally charming and "impractical." But I think they meant it. If I had been asked what I would have done as Pope: put on blue jeans, T-shirt and sneakers and walk out the Vatican front gates into the streets; for better or worse, allow the Pope to be known.

Yet, to be known as a person seems to be in contradiction to the way in which popes—and the palace guards who control their lives and even most of the journalists who write about them—understand the papal role. Alas, this seems so far from the familiar intimacy Jesus shared with the crowds that swarmed around him, touching him as often as they could, and from Peter the fisherman who, in the peculiar oral tradition of retreat-talk folklore, we know as a warm-hearted, passionate bungler who was reliable only most of the time—but somehow a "rock," a natural leader of men. Yet, through the machinations of history where, as Hans Küng says in *The Church,* "the Petrine *ministry* appeared to men to be more and more a Petrine *dominion*," the papacy has so evolved that we can almost say that we are *personally* closer to Peter than to his successor Paul VI.

Rome and Milan

Unfortunately, reading two standard biographies of Giovanni Battista Montini—John G. Clancy's *Apostle for Our Time* (Kenedy, 1963) and William E Barrett's *Shepherd of Mankind* (Doubleday, 1964)—does little to break the mystery of this man. We see a remote, frail, owl-eyed, sickly child who, in later life, would astonish his contemporaries by his capacity for work; a boy about whom so few anecdotes survive—except that around the age of nine he both decided to become a journalist in imitation of his political-journalist father Giorgio Montini, and also fought a fist-fight with a boy who had tied an old pan to a cat's tail; a cold and aloof young cleric so humorless that he had to learn what humor was by studying the reactions of his companions to jokes, but who in the 1920s somehow became emotionally alive as the spiritual advisor to students—some of them militantly anti-fascist—at the University of Rome. When they played on the beach he would tuck up his cassock and romp through the surf as if, as one student remarked, "he had just discovered wading." He probably had.

But that warmth, it seems, had to be put aside during most of his thirty years in the Vatican Secretariat of State, where his vocation was to silently submerge his personality in service of Pius XII. There he enjoyed for a while the reputation, encouraged by *Time* magazine, as the voice in the Pope's left ear, the defender of the French worker-priest experiment, while his competitor, the gruff Monsignor Domenico Tardini, whispered in the right. Vatican-watchers and gossips analyzed their relationship like today's Far-Eastern correspondents in Hong Kong picking up descriptions of wall posters from travelers from Communist China. What did it mean that Montini accompanied Pius on his spontaneous tour of the Rome hit by Allied bombs? And why did Pius offer them both red hats in such a way that they would have to refuse them? Or did he? And was Montini's 1954 assignment to Milan an exile, a sign he had lost favor at court, or a chance for pastoral experience to prepare him for the papacy? And who cares?

I remember that I cared. I was a Fordham senior who had just spent a year in France learning something about the alienation of the French people, particularly the workers, from the Church; if, somehow, I thought, a man who supported the worker-priests could become Pope we would have a Pope of the people again, a new Church; and I remember how disappointed I was when, as a Jesuit novice convinced that the Church needed the austere Montini, the conclave came up with someone named Roncalli who was obviously overweight.

Milan seemed, for a while, a return to the pastoral excitement he had felt as a student chaplain: he called himself a priest of the workers, but *not* of the "left," as he launched his campaign to build 72 new pre-fabricated churches, preached his Christian philosophy of the dignity of work, clasped grimy hands in factories, slums and coal mines—though he surely looked incongruous in a mine shaft wearing an archbishop's crimson robes and a lace surplice and with a miner's helmet perched on his head, still the man of another time and world, the remote young priest discovering laughter or wading, sincerely seizing the symbol that might gain him respect in a foreign land.

When Archbishop Montini was finally elected Pope Paul VI, June 21, 1963—after remaining largely silent during the Council's first session—it is significant that his last effort before leaving Milan was in publicly defending the reputation of Pius XII, the man who in many ways he would come to resemble, against the charges in Rolf Hochhuth's play, *The Deputy*, that the cold and political Pacelli had failed in his moral obligation to protest the Holocaust.

Reacting to reviews of the play, in a long letter to the London *Tablet* [June 29, 1963] Montini protested that his former mentor was not a coward, not a "heartless solitary," but a man of "exquisite sensibility and the most delicate human sympathies," who "wished to enter fully into the history of his own afflicted time: with a deep sense that he himself was a part of that history, he wished to participate fully in it, to share its sufferings in his own heart and soul."

His argument that Pius measured his protest to avoid worse reprisals will remain, to many, unconvincing.

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What could have been worse than what Hitler did to the Jews? And what of the moral authority that was lost? Yet the letter makes me think that Montini had foreseen his own pontificate and the criticisms he would receive, as he steeled himself to hear, as the years went on, that he was a cold, indecisive, and intellectual "Hamlet," with no real feeling for the real or imagined sufferings of others—a poor family struggling to feed a too-quickly-growing household and saddled with *Humanae Vitae* as well; a priest who wants to marry; or an Earl Butz, the foulmouthed American Secretary of Agriculture who didn't want some celibate pontiff talking about population and how to distribute the world food supply.

Yet, the similarities to Pius XII were there—from an austere demeanor belied by a remarkable face-to-face warmth (Montini used to prepare the "personal" remarks Pius would say to individuals at audiences) and the wide-ranging intellect down to the penchant both had for meticulously going over printers' galleys of official pronouncements, which led one frustrated *peritus* to crack of Paul VI during the Council, "What does he think he is, a *managing editor*?"

Surely his emotional, ecumenical, physical embraces of non-Catholic religious leaders and his dramatic pilgrimages to the Holy Land, New York, Fatima, Ephesus, Bogota, Geneva, Kamala, Sardinia, Teheran, Bombay, Dacca, Manila, Pago Pago, Sydney, Djakarta, Hong Kong, Ceylon, and Italian cities, giving alms as he traveled, were meant to show that *this* Pope—and, in him, *all* Popes—was not a "heartless solitary" cut off from "the history of his own afflicted time." And surely his powerful words at the United Nations, October 4, 1965— "*Jamais plus la guerre*," cried in a voice we can still hear—and his "tomorrow may be too late" message to the June 1978 U.N. Special Session on Disarmament were meant to counter any charge that the papacy had been silent in the face of another kind of holocaust.

The *New York Times* was on strike when Paul VI came to New York, but its writers covered the visit anyway for a paperback book, *The Pope's Journey to the United States* (Bantam, 1965). John Cogley, who flew with him from Rome, wrote, "Pope Paul VI is a man of resounding dignity and gravity. In his presence the hush seems utterly natural. . . ." It seemed evident "that his hour of glory was also an hour of special trial and that deep within himself he might have envied those popes who described themselves as 'prisoners of the Vatican,' even while he knew his mission is to go out to the world." And Bernard Weintaub wrote, "It was, in a sense, as if Fifth, Park, and Lenox Avenues and Queens Boulevard had stopped breathing as the frail visitor moved about." Paul VI rode 24 miles through the city's sleasiest and most luxurious neighborhoods in a bubble-topped car as countless thousands waited and watched—some irritated that the motorcade had whisked by too quickly—and said a low mass for 90,000 in Yankee Stadium at an altar which, American journalism was thoughtful enough to record, stood "171 feet from home plate."

He also told his U.N. and—according to James Reston—Washington listeners something they didn't want to hear: that life is a "banquet" and it would be "irrational" to use birth control to reduce the "number of guests." Yet again, in almost 45,000 words a copy, there is hardly a clue on the personality of the man, except that those sad eyes light up for children. What seems to matter is the symbol, the myth, the fact that *he*—as the embodiment of Christian ideals and as spokesman for universal mankind—is *there*.

The young American playwright, John Guare, who grew up in Queens where the nuns in Saint Joan of Arc Grammar School yearned desperately to go to Rome and touch the Pope, built his play, *The House of Blue Leaves*, around the personal impact of the Pope's visit on a Queens family and three nuns waiting for him to drive by. One character, Bunny Flingus, up at 4:45 A.M. to get a place at the curb, fantasizes: "And

right now, the Pope is flying through that star-filled sky, bumping planets out of the way, and he's asleep dreaming of the mobs waiting for him. When famous people go to sleep at night, it's us they dream of, Artie. The famous ones—they're the real people. We're the creatures of their dreams. . . ."

Bunny will make a wish as the Pope passes—that Bananas Shaughnessy, Artie's insane wife, will die soon so she can marry Artie. Artie's dream is that the Pope's visit to the U.N. will stop the Vietnam war so his son Ronnie won't have to go. But Ronnie has gone AWOL with a mad scheme to slip into Yankee Stadium disguised as an altar boy to blow up the Pope. The figure of the Pope functions in the play as the temporary, superstitious focal point of the family's other dreams—the American dreams of celebrity and success—while, to Guare, Paul VI's pleas for peace at the U.N. and his description in his Stadium homily of the American way of life as based on spiritual values are as realistic as zoo-keeper Artie's dreams of a song-writing career. The

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Pope is no more real to their lives than Jackie Kennedy and Mayor Lindsay and the other celebrities who flicker on the TV screen.

Far from ending with the Pope's visit, the Vietnam war got worse as Lyndon Johnson, who had discussed the war with Paul VI in New York, expanded the war with his bombing campaign of the North. Paul VI was not exactly silent about Vietnam, he frequently anguished over it. But he remained too much, like Pius XII, the prudent diplomat to issue the clear ringing condemnation of American policy—particularly the bombing—that might have strengthened the American peace movement and shortened the war.

After 1970, Paul VI, for the most part, stayed home. The public imagination, unchallenged by his symbolic flights, could allow the old image of the unhappy Holy Father, "the prisoner," to reassert itself, particularly when he appeared at his window to lament the decline of public morals, the defection of priests, birth control, divorce, secularization and pornography—though the memory of the gentle, absolutely sincere man was too strong to disappear.

In a very unusual short story, "Roman Ordinary," [*Harpers'*, March 1977], poet and novelist John L'Heureux used fiction to both satirize the public image of Paul created by the standard day-in-the-life-of-the-Pope journalism that has been with us since Pius XII and, in a strange way, suggest a grim and exotic interpretation of the Pope's life. He begins, "His Holiness Pope Paul VI is an ordinary saint. All day long he does what he has to do, and at night he dances."

The biting story details the Pope's rising, prayers and diet—granola, tea, a single sweet roll, lamb's tongue, a single caramel, a single glass of wine; the streams of visitors, little bureaucratic chores, the crowds outside the window: "Pilgrims are lined up waiting for a papal blessing, a sea of believers awash in their saris and doubleknits and platform shoes. So much ugliness and hope. Did Christ have all this in mind? The thought flickers for a second through the papal consciousness, but His Holiness extinguishes it with a single bat of an eyelash." Paul looks at his face in the mirror and sighs over "God's little joke"—his startling resemblance to Adolf Eichmann. Around him he observes "everything is in the process of decay." He pulls himself meticulously, dutifully through the day. Then, at night, in the privacy of his chamber, he dons flowing white pajamas, unlocks an armoire which contains "his bones," and dances ecstatically till dawn. A dead man presiding over a dead institution?

But if the *Harpers'* short story, with its weird ending, seemed outrageous, the publication of Curtis Bill Pepper's "A Day in the Life of the Pope" [*New York Times Magazine*, April 10, 1977] within a few weeks merely demonstrated how accurately L'Heureux had perceived and mimicked the mass media's perception of the Pope. Pepper obviously did not observe what he describes—Paul lying in bed in his white nightshirt as the bells of Rome awaken him at dawn—but constructed the "day," including rare direct quotes, from interviews with Paul's aides who probably thought they were doing their boss a favor by portraying him sympathetically: ". . . the first of the modern popes shares the dilemma of modern man: He seeks solitude and silence, yet longs for the embrace of a brother."

Most of the piece is the familiar compilation of menus and audiences—including a highly emotional encounter with a bewildered, fatherless, blind boy whom Paul embraces and tells he is his "father." But, at other moments, perhaps the aides have revealed more than they intended—particularly Paul's repeated laments, even to his closest associates, that he is misunderstood. When he reads news stories where he is urged to resign, we get "the prisoner": "The Lord created this, I certainly didn't! It's not easy to bear such a weight. But Jesus said to Peter: You will be my disciple and upon you I will build my church! Yes, it would be easy to say, 'I don't want it!' Can't they understand this? Can't they give a little help or show a little care?"

That evening as Paul and a few close aides watch the TV news they are confronted with a feminist who ridicules the celibate Pope's arguments against ordaining women. In offended response the little group flicks off the TV and sits momentarily in glum silence until one of them brings some soothing wine. Then Paul, saddened at being misunderstood, explains his position on women to his priest-secretary by talking about the respective roles of his own mother and father, his mother's emphasis on prayer, his father's on action. The end of the day approaches. The secretary operates the hi-fi for the Holy Father. Does he want to hear the "inspired beauty" of Mary Magdalene's "I Don't Know How to Love Him" from *Jesus Christ Superstar* or some Mozart? This evening, Mozart. "All day long he has given himself to his church, to the world. Now he can turn to his inner priesthood. . . ." Finally there is a letter from the blind boy, promising prayer for his new "father."

I suspect it will be the great paradox of Paul VI's reign that he seems to have taken his strongest—least "diplomatic"—disciplinary stands on those questions which have been most "personal"—the ones which for so many Americans touch most intimately on the individual's sense of himself or herself as a person, the sexual identity: the freedom of married couples to decide when and how to express their sexual love and determine the number of children they can have; the freedom of diocesan priests (not religious orders who freely define themselves through the life of the vows) to receive all the sacraments, including matrimony; the freedom of women who feel called to ordination to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders.

This is doubly tragic because, while this most intel-

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lectual of modern popes may have sincerely felt he was protecting the integrity and moral authority of the church by "unpopular" decisions, the weight of scholarly theological—not just popular—opinion *within* the Church has not supported him; and, in the long run, he has inadvertently undermined the very authority he sought to uphold. Meanwhile, he has expended his physical energies so generously, but most diplomatically, as a traveling symbol for peace—in a worldly arena where, as Josef Stalin cynically but correctly observed, the Pope has no armed divisions. To his credit, on social, political, economic and international issues the Pope's thinking and teaching have been consistently more progressive than those of most American Catholics; but, except in general terms, they have never been communicated with the same force as the church's sexual discipline to the Church at large.

It may be argued that if Paul VI had been any stronger and more specific in his attacks on economic injustice and, for example, the level of American violence in Vietnam—particularly in requiring follow-through from American bishops—he would have undiplomatically "alienated his constituency." Yet, Jesus, one might answer, did not ask Peter to be a diplomat. He asked him to feed his sheep and expect a violent death. Paul VI, ever sensitive and intelligent, knew that too. In his last months he once offered himself to take the place of a hijacking hostage and later, in another burst of feeling, escaped the papal "We" to plead with terrorists for the life of Aldo Moro: "I love him as a member of the great human family, as a brother in faith and a son of the Church of Christ." Because of the way he chose to live and because of the way he understood his office, Giovanni Battista Montini will never be understood the way any human being as sensitive as himself would like to be understood. But he has earned his own sentence—"I love him as a member of the great human family . . ."—as his epitaph.

AGENDA FOR THE PAPACY

What the Church needs from the next Pope

SHAKING DOWN & SORTING OUT

FATHER RICHARD P. MCBRIEN *is professor of theology at Boston College and director of its Institute for the Study of Religious Education and Service.*

As a group politicians are not remarkable for their sense of history. They tend to exaggerate the significance of the immediate and the ephemeral. Thus, a forthcoming presidential election is confidently described as the most critical election in U.S. history. Our governmental institutions, our free enterprise system, our personal liberties, our commitment to social justice, our standing in the forum of nations will somehow hang in the balance.

For that reason there was always something peculiarly attractive and refreshing about the understated, almost diffident rhetoric of Eugene McCarthy. Many things are indeed important, and some things are even very important. But events which alter the course of history —even of a single nation or church—are truly rare, and they are unpredictable in any case.

These reservations notwithstanding, I propose the following thesis: Barring abbreviation by sudden death, the term of the new Pope will prove to be the most crucial in modern Church history, rivaled only by Pope John XXIII's. The thesis has to be explained against the background of the pontificate just concluded.

During the course of Pope Paul VI's incumbency, the Catholic Church showed at least three different faces. From 1963, with only one of four council sessions completed, until 1968, with the publication of *Humanae Vitae*, the Church seemed marked by excitement, even enthusiasm. To be a member of the Church in those years meant being part of something on the move, something perceived by insider and outsider alike as having value, as having the capacity to make a difference to the quality of life and the direction of world events.

From the summer of the encyclical to the fall of 1971, with the issuance of the Third International Synod of Bishops' declaration on the ordained priesthood, the Church showed the strains of conflict, tension, unrest, and anger. Church attendance and vocations fell; departures from the priesthood and religious life increased.

Although the 1971 synod spoke with exceeding wisdom and courage on the matter of social justice, its pronouncement on the priesthood made it clear that there would be, indeed there could be, no additional institutional reforms of any significance during the reign of Paul VI. And so, with the shouting having subsided and the rhetoric softened, the Church entered a period of quiet attrition at a slower but inexorable pace.

The conventional wisdom asserts that the new Pope should be like his predecessor, a moderate conservative. How else will he be able to hold the Church together? He must steer the same middle course, suffering

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Küng and Lefebvre alike. If there is to be a concession to modernity or to public opinion, let it be only in the personality of the new Pope. Let him be a less anguished figure, more benign, more *simpatico*, less plaintive.

I do not agree with this point of view. Given the state of mind of many in the Catholic Church today and given the range of their expectations for the future, a moderately conservative Pope will only intensify the frustrations of both right and left alike. History may someday look very kindly upon these fifteen Pauline years, but I should doubt very much that history will have any praise for a successor who tries simply to reproduce those years over the next decade and a half.

What the Catholic Church needs now is a shaking down and a sorting out. If Providence has her on a conservative course, then let that become unmistakably clear under the new Pope so that those who cannot abide such a course will be able to pursue other options for the sake of God's Kingdom without further delay. And if Providence has a more progressive course for the Church, then let *that* be unmistakably clear so that those who could not really accept Vatican II and have been waiting in hope for the day of its effective repeal will be free to pursue the holy grail of orthodoxy in some other Christian household.

The new Pope will not be able to keep his ecclesiological cards hidden for very long. They will have to be placed on the table, one by one, as he makes his first important appointments, as he issues his first encyclical, as he responds to the first major challenge to his authority from left or right.

To be sure, there are far more important issues facing the Church over the long expanse of human history than are the issues of birth control, clerical celibacy, and the ordination of women. But a Pope's approach to such issues as these is symptomatic of his approach to the deeper issues they imply: the meaning of human sexuality and its relationship to psychic and spiritual growth; male-female complementarity; the interpretation and mediation of the divine will; the scope and limitations of ecclesiastical authority; the principles of subsidiarity and coresponsibility as hallmarks of a Church that is first and foremost a community.

I have deliberately included no reference here to the painfully evident gap between rich and poor, oppressor and oppressed. It is not because I think that the new Pope can afford to be inattentive to the demands of justice and peace, but that issues of justice and peace in the world at large cannot be divorced from issues of justice and peace in the Church herself. An ecclesiastical leader who proves indecisive about the latter will be inevitably less convincing about the former.

Accordingly, we should look forward to a new Petrine minister who will, without prejudice to due process and his responsibility to mount reasonable and persuasive arguments, (1) revoke the anti-contraception teaching of *Humanae Vitae* (while reaffirming the Church's concern for human life at every stage of development); (2) abolish obligatory celibacy for priests (while encouraging on a case-by-case basis the readmission of married priests to active ministry); and (3) set in motion forces which will lead eventually to the full incorporation of qualified women to priestly and episcopal ministry (beginning perhaps with the diaconate, since ordination of women to the priesthood remains the one reform-issue which continues to evoke a large negative response from the Church's general membership, including women).

A Pope with the theological vision and pastoral courage to pursue such initiatives as these can provide the Church with a kind of leadership that is at once unambiguous and progressive. At least there would no longer be any serious doubt about the Church's future course.

GENUINE COMMUNICATION

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I see the failure of the pontificate just ended as a failure to promote creative communication within the Church. Correspondingly, the chief task for the new pope is to remove the institutional barriers to such communication. That would release the creative energies of Catholics. The limiting assumption would be dropped that all that has to be done is to adapt what already exists.

To be creative communication must be free from domination and proceed in a mutual recognition of personal autonomy. That demands advancing beyond the "conventional" stage of consciousness, at which Catholic leaders themselves seem to be stuck and at which, at any rate, they want to keep the rest of the church.

I am, of course, using the distinction made by Lawrence Kohlberg between the conventional and the post-conventional or autonomous levels of moral consciousness. At the conventional level, an individual simply follows the fixed rules of his social group. The moral stance is one of conformity; the orientation is towards authority and the law and order of a particular social system. At the post-conventional level, self-reflection gives rise to a distinction between formulated rules and the universal principles that generate the rules. Individuals reach an autonomy of conscience, enabling them, if need be, to create new rules.

The identity of the autonomous person is not tied to particular social institutions or to the fixed contents

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of a tradition. It is universal in character, allowing a continuity of the self through a sequence of particular identities when institutions and traditions change. But it remains a social reality, because it is created and sustained through intersubjective communication, insofar as that is free from domination and pursued on the basis of the autonomy and equality of the participants as persons.

Today's problem is the clash between the autonomous identity we admire and strive to achieve and the rigid particularism of our social and political institutions, demanding conformism and non-reflective behavior. The exercise of personal autonomy becomes restricted to the private sphere, and people feel themselves prisoners in a social framework that does not allow them to function as free persons.

The same problem cripples the Catholic Church. Institutionally it continues to function at the conventional level, holding tight to traditions and rules and euphemizing domineering authority as divinely commissioned hierarchy. Meanwhile, more and more Catholics have reached a post-conventional religious identity, many thrust into self-reflection by Vatican II and *Humanae Vitae*. Hence the tension between active, self-reflective Catholics, who wish to draw upon the resources of the Catholic tradition but by critical appropriation rather than conformity, and an official Church that blocks free and open communication by unilateral action and appeals to obedience.

The temptation for Church leaders is to dismiss the more alert members as troublemakers and rely upon the passive loyalty of the "silent majority." Our society however, no longer needs a religious worldview as an ideology. Science with technology has been promoted

FLASH! *DIRECT FROM ROME*

VATICAN CITY, August 25—Not even the imposing power of Michelangelo's Last Judgment looming over the 113 Cardinals filing into the Sistine Chapel this evening could hush the rumors that flit like *putti* around the Renaissance precincts of the Sacred City. Wrapped in their violet cassocks and wool capes, the Cardinals are now wrapped in the deep secrecy of the Conclave as well. Progressive Catholic spokespersons like Tiny McMullin, American publisher of "Justice and Joy" holy cards and chief organizer of the Committee of Americans for a Responsible Papacy (CARP), are still chafing under this cloud of secrecy. But a week of intrigue in incense-filled backrooms has focused the attention of veteran Vaticanologists on two men:

Cardinal Ernesto Jaime (Jimmy) Bono Bravo (39) of Ben Salem Island. Born on an airplane over New York when his Italian Marxist novelist father and Irish actress mother escaped from the Fascists at the beginning of World War II, Jimmy Bravo (pronounced *Brah*-vo) has two Ph.D's, one in political economy from the London School of Economics and another in American Studies from Yale where he both played rugby and rowed on the crew.

Bravo entered the priesthood following two years in the Peace Corps in Pago Pago and two more in prison after refusing to tell an American court his sources for an article he wrote on Dan Berrigan's escape from the FBI.

Named Cardinal immediately after his ordination, he turned his episcopal palace into an orphanage and officiated at a ritual demolition and burial of the episcopal limousine in the town square. He lives in a slum in a one-room dirt-floor grass hut with a goat, a dog, and an old white horse he rides for exercise. His brief, pre-seminary marriage to a Vietnamese refugee—entered to help her obtain U.S. citizenship—was annulled in the Diocese of Brooklyn; and he is quoted as saying privately that the denial of the priesthood to women, as well as obligatory celibacy and *Humanae Vitae*, are "scandals and crimes as great as the Crusades and the Inquisition." At liturgies he includes the names of Teihard de Chardin and Henry David Thoreau in the canon of the Mass. A defender of human rights everywhere, he has defied any dictator in the world to kill him.

Progressives are expected to fall in behind him.

Cardinal Grando Gordo Malo (64), head of the Sacred Congregation for Order, Truth and Silence. The son of a noble Italian munitions manufacturer and a Hapsburg countess, Malo (pronounced *Moll*-o) has never been outside Italy and leaves his Vatican desk only to tour his villas, vineyards and chemical factories, driven in his armored car with a motorcycle and helicopter escort. Enrolled in the seminary by his parents at the age of five, and rejecting secular learning—as well as philosophy and theology—as distracting from his vocation, he made himself an expert of canon and property law. Here he used his skills to evict 100 orphans from a seaside mansion he desired as an episcopal palace. He has no hobbies, but likes to relax by sitting to have his portrait painted.

Though little known outside his immediate circle, he is said by those who observe him to have a warm smile and a deep laugh.

Could be a compromise candidate. ERASMUS MAC CROCODILE

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to the dominant ideology in popular consciousness—actions and institutions are justified as scientific or technically efficient. The ideological function left to religion is the secondary one of therapeutic: it provides consolatory release from the impersonal routines of a technocratic society. But the Church has many competitors in the field of therapy, and one wonders how long it can survive in a recognizable form against more exotic and fashionable remedies.

That, in any event, is a shameful solution. The honest way forward—which one can at least dream that the new pope might recognize—would be to establish within the Church a process of communication of a post-conventional kind, that is among free persons who are prepared to agree but not to conform.

The main obstacle to such untrammeled communication is the Vatican power structure. It must be dismantled. In a Church based upon genuinely free communication among its members, there is simply no place for a pope with absolute authority or for a controlling central bureaucracy. All hierarchy might eventually be seen as an anomaly, but for now the Church could at least allow the bishops themselves to function outside a framework of conformity and obedience to Rome. The synod of bishops might be freed from dominating control, and events like the coming Conference of South America bishops might take place without manipulative interference from the Vatican. Then perhaps some bishops might promote communcation within their dioceses that acknowledges the autonomous personal identity of the participants and does not introduce the baton of authority at every departure from presently formulated doctrines and norms. This hope that institutions might be created to embody and stablize their new, reflective and critical religious identities is the chief reason why many Catholics still bother with the official Church.

If the Catholic Church were to find ways of institutionalizing (and not stifling) creative communication among free persons, it would make a major contribution to the present social and political needs of humanity. We are locked in particularistic, oppressive institutions that do not correspond to how we now think and function as persons. My dream for the pope is a Catholic Church, no longer just another oppressive institution, but the social embodiment of free persons in open communication, seeking agreement to questions of Christian truth and value.

Certainly, creative communication is needed in the world situation. The missionary age is dead. The Catholic Church is being called to open itself to a non-dominating exchange with other religions and cultures. No appeal to the conventional identity of any or all of the existing traditions will pass today, but only a shift to the creative level which generated and sustains those traditions and which can give them new form.

A MODEL OF HUMANITY

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The central doctrine of Christianity is that Jesus was most fully human and that it is precisely in him that humanity is fully divinized. With the prompting of the spirit of Jesus, Christians attempt to follow his humanizing, and hence divinizing, example as fully as possible.

But what is the model of being human that Jesus presents to Christians? Of course it is multi-faceted, but at the heart of it is the love of God by way of love of oneself and one's neighbor as oneself. To spread that Good News, about how to be human, and to help people live it is the purpose of the Gathering of the Followers of Jesus, the Church.

However gloriously and ingloriously the Gathering of Jesus's Followers, the Church, helped humanize the world in the past, in recent times it has become increasingly clear that essential as personal charity and compassion are, they are not enough. The relationships that exist between individuals and groups are real and constitute part of our humanity. They, too, must be fully humanized, after the Jesus model of love. (And in this century of anti-Semitism I cannot refrain from repeating that Jesus found and passed on this model of love from his Jewish heritage, which he gladly lived to the full.) To the extent the Church does not effectively preach the Good News of humanizing love to the interpersonal, intergroup, societal dimensions of humanity—the message is to eliminate not just "individual" but also "systemic" hostility, injustice, indifference and other barriers to love—to that extent it fails in its mission.

But this preaching of systemic humanization, of justice, love, freedom, responsibility, cannot be accomplished simply, or even at first, by words. It must be achieved in lived action—systemic action. The Church's very structure, its pattern of living, must be an *example* (after Jesus's, under the prompting of his spirit) of a humanizing structure.

And what is a humanizing structure? One which leads all persons within it to an even fuller development and utilization of all of their faculties: one which expands and deepens their minds, sharpens their powers of judgment, strengthens their decision-making abilities, fosters their sensitivity to other persons and things—all, as St. Paul stated in paraphrasing Pindar's maternal image, within God "in whom we move, live and have our being."

To continue the parental image, Holy Mother the Church today will have to be a good parent no longer dealing with infants but with offspring "come of age,"

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whose greatest need is to be able to exercise their own decision-making in responsible freedom. We all know the tragedies of families where parents treat their grown offspring like children. In far too many ways the Catholic Church resembles such a domineering parent. Despite Vatican II for the most part the Church's structure still systematically treats its members like children who simply need to be instructed and directed, whose human capacities are hence minimized rather than maximized. The structural pattern must be reversed, and soon, lest the Church find itself another tragically shattered family.

This is the awesome task the new pope has before him: to reverse the flow of responsibility. From-the-top-downward must now become from-the-bottom-upward. We need in Catholicism a "hier-archy," a "rule of the holy," in the sense that all the baptized are called "holy" by St. Paul; we do not need a "higher-archy."

On the grass-roots level the parish people must inform themselves, deliberate, make decisions—and take the consequences. It is not adequate that this be done by the leave or the magnanimity of a progressive pastor. These responsibilities of the baptized must be built into the very structure; they must become part of canon law, not to be overturned by some new pastor or bishop. The same sort of structural exercise of decision-making responsibility from below must also be put into action—and into canon law—on the diocesan, national and international levels.

The greatest scandal of 1978 is the super-secret election of the pope, which really ought to be super-public and super-participatory. As Pope Leo the Great stated in 451 A.D., "The leader of all be elected by all." The first thing the new pope needs to undertake is the elimination of the College of Cardinals as a body of Church leaders appointed solely from above. The persons entrusted with the election of the pope should be a group representative of all the baptized—laity, religious, priests, bishops—chosen by them, and (this is extremely important) responsible to them.

To the shocked retort that Church leaders are appointed by and responsible to God, the calm response is, "Of course they are; all responsible leadership should be so rightly understood." As St Paul says, "all authority is from God." But just as the divinely sustained responsible leadership exercised by a senator or president is one that is responsible to the people it serves, so too should that of Church leadership be. At the same time safeguards against a dehumanizing tyranny of the mob must also be built into the structure—that too is part of systemic humanization.

The new pope will have to encourage and insist vigorously upon a full systemic humanization of all the Church's structures—and thus also its spirit—from the international to the grass-roots level. As in Vatican II, he will have to reach outside of the present curial and hierarchical Establishment to marshal the talents needed for this massive task.

The new pope cannot perform this staggering work alone, nor can the rest of responsible Christians wait upon his initiative. Bishops, pastors and people must work creatively to put shared responsibility into action, custom, and *law* at every level—now.

Having preached his Good News about a truly human existence by his own lived example, Jesus could then speak it in words that carried authority and credibility. The Church—and that's all of us—"should go and do in like manner."

GREASY KID STUFF

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THE SCREEN

When I first saw *Grease,* eight or ten years ago, it was an off-beat little musical playing in a run-down theater on the Lower East Side. Everything about it was—well, you might say—weird. The theater was definitely in a weird place for a theater. The songs were weird. The characters were weird. The performers playing them were even more weird. And the whole idea of being nostalgic about the 1950s was the most weird of all. The heady excitement of the sixties, which had been based on a reaction against the fifties, still lingered on then. The people who did that original stage version seemed to realize this, too. The male lead was so rubber-boned and long-necked that he was a caricature of a fifties "greaser."

But John Travolta, who plays the male lead in the new film version of the musical, is more an idealization of a greaser than a caricature of one. A decade after *Grease* first appeared, nostalgia for the fifties—for "hoody" guys and girls in circle skirts with poodles *appliquèd* on them—is an idea whose time has come. As the seventies have made it increasingly clear that the sixties didn't work out either, the fifties have begun to look rosier in retrospect. Americans have begun to wish that they had left well enough alone, and nostalgia for the fifties has become a centrist notion rather than an eccentric one. *Grease* has moved from off-off Broadway to Broadway, where it is now the longest-running show, and then on to Hollywood, where it has been made into a blockbuster as well.

Compared to the original, the Hollywood version of *Grease* is in fact a Roman Circus, complete with a Ben-Hur chariot race between two dragsters near the end. John Travolta occasionally gets to show some charm that is in scale with the original musical. One number that he sings and dances with his pals on bleachers near

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the beginning has this quality especially. Travolta apes the fifties in a way that is reminiscent of the stage version and pleasantly campy. But elsewhere this *Grease* is busting at the seams of the original. It wants to overwhelm us not only with nostalgia, but—just to be on the safe side—also with stars, production numbers, the works.

The result is that it stuffs more into this little musical than it was ever meant to hold, and the whole thing comes apart. Olivia Newton-John has the pretty and pert looks that idealize a fifties girlfriend appropriately, and on top of that she's an international star from Australia who will boost overseas sales. The only trouble is that these two qualifications cancel each other out. Her British accent makes her ridiculous in this reprise of Americana. She's as ridiculous as the contrivance that brings American Bandstand to a sock-hop at Travolta's high school, so he can do an encore of his money-making dance numbers from *Saturday Night Fever*. Essentially the movie attempts to improve the original *Grease* with extra added attractions like this. The only thing the movie-makers decided to leave out are the small but real pleasures of the original.

Why *The Buddy Holly Story* succeeds any better than *Grease* is in some ways hard to tell. It is another attempt to appeal to nostalgia for the fifties, which it also idealizes grossly. The fifties are, in memory, that period when life was without serious conflict. There was no racial conflict, for instance, as we see when Buddy (Gary Busey) and the Crickets (Charles Martin Smith and Don Stroud) are the first white group to play the Apollo Theater in Harlem. The soul brothers dance in the aisles, and Buddy goes on tour with other black performers. Buddy also marries a Porto Rick-an, with whom he lives blissfully in a two-story apartment with a bank of studio windows on one wall and a working fireplace. (It's the fifties own idea, seen often in movies of the time, of how a New York love nest should look.

Even record company executives were all angels in those days. The first New York company to whom Buddy sends a demo simply releases it, thus giving him a hit record before he's even left Lubbock, Texas. When he does come to New York, he walks out of their first meeting because the director of the record company won't let him produce his own records; but the record exec immediately chases after him to give in. Soon the man is coming into his recording studio deferentially to ask whether Buddy can spare some time to talk to him, and to mumble his thanks to Buddy for producing so many wonderful records for the company besides his own.

I don't know how close all this is to the facts of Buddy Holly's life, but the movie's attempt to touch all bases with Buddy leads to some interesting inconsistencies in his personality. Back in Lubbock at Sunday dinner before he's made it big, when his parents ask him about the future, Buddy says he's never given it a thought. That's carefree Buddy, the boy with music in his soul. But later as he sits in a Cadillac El Dorado for which he's about to pay cash, one of the Crickets reminds him admiringly, "You always said you'd have a El Dorado before you was twenty-one, Buddy." That's hard-driving Buddy, the man who had a vision of destiny. Despite such contradictions, what holds this movie together where *Grease* comes apart is one performance, Gary Busey's. The thing that saves *The Buddy Holly Story* from its over-indulgence in fifties nostalgia is that it's a small enough production to *be* held together by a single performance.

The lynchpin of the movie is Busey's performance of Holly's songs. With his curly hair, lanky frame and gaps between his teeth, Busey looks pretty square. And when you add Holly's white socks and glasses with half-plastic, half-wire frames, he becomes what the fifties themselves used to call a "geek" (a term no doubt lifted from carnival jargon, but having special connotations of a goof and a freak—somebody really out of it). The total effect is of a clean-cut, normal boy of the period. But when Busey sings Holly's songs—"Peggy Sue," "That'll Be the Day," "Maybe Baby"—his lips draw back baring his teeth and his eyes become fixed in a way that suggests perfectly the emergence of demonic rock-and-roll from the straight-arrowhood of the fifties.

That is what this movie is really about, and what makes its idealization of Holly's life offstage right. The conservative picture of Holly's private life makes us sense more fully the radical effect his performances had on the public. The movie opens with Holly and the Crickets doing a local radio show from a roller rink in Lubbock. Their first song is a Les Paul and Mary Ford tune to which the skaters glide on as if it were Muzak. Then Holly decides to try out one of his own tunes for the first time in public. The parents gape, the radio sponsors cancel, and the kids go wild. Being reminded of the days when *anything* someone did in public had that kind of effect really is enough to make you nostalgic.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

AN APPEAL—The Chol-Chol Foundation of Washington, D.C., "is seeking to mobilize people . . . so that all men together may strive for a better world." And while they appeal for funds to build schools, increase food production by technical assistance and to alleviate extreme poverty, the chief aim of this ecumenical, tax-exempt organization "is to feed hungry children." Contributions should go to: The Chol-Chol Foundation for Human Development, 4936 Loughboro Road, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016

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MUST THOUGHT BE MERELY POIGNANT?

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

The Life of the Mind: Vol. I: Thinking
Vol. II: Willing

HANNAH ARENDT

Harcourt, Brace, $12.50 ea.

Vol. I: [*258 pp.*]
Vol. II: [*277 pp.*]

In the second half of the Eighteenth century in Germany, philosophy began one of its richest and most intense periods—some would say, its final period. From Kant, through Fichte, Hegel and Marx to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and then to Husserl and Heidegger, there was a remarkable flowering of human thought. Moreover the phenomenon was not confined to the professional thinkers but had its impact upon the entire educated class. Kant very carefully summarized the complexities of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in the *Prolegomena*, precisely in order to win a wider audience; Fichte delivered his enormously popular *Speeches to the German Nation* and wanted to give patriotic talks to the troops fighting the French; and Schelling's lectures in Berlin were attended by, among others, Soren Kierkegaard, Jacob Burckhardt, Bakunin and Frederich Engels.

Indeed, Engels called those lectures "the battlefield where domination over German public opinion in religion and politics, which is to say over Germany itself" was being settled. And later, Engel's political descendents were to debate the dialectic in a struggle over tactics within the workers' movement. It was that tradition of broad-based philosophic discussion which permeated the Vienna which later produced Freud, Wittgenstein and a regiment of lesser geniuses. Indeed, it was precisely the tremendous accomplishments of the German Classical Philosophy which made the rise of a barbarian anti-intellectual, Adolph Hitler, even more shattering than it would have ordinarily been.

It is quite possible that philosophy will never again reach the stature it thus achieved in Middle Europe between Kant and Heidegger. But it is heartening that a daughter of that tradition has published two volumes of serious intellectual analysis which were partly published in the *New Yorker* and have found a wide readership. The appearance of Hannah Arendt's *The Life of the Mind* is a most welcome and significant event. In a society which is increasingly uncertain—and often unconcerned—about basic values, it is good that fundamental questions are posed before a non-specialist public.

There is, however, a problem when one tries to evaluate these books. Hannah Arendt died when her project—which dared to survey the immense territory covered by Kant's three critiques: thinking, willing and judging—was unfinished. *Thinking* and *Willing* were delivered as Gifford lectures and the analysis of judgment exists only as excerpts from courses Arendt taught. So it is, for instance, that neither of these volumes really returns to the question which, the author tells us, was the inspiration for the whole enterprise: Could Eichmann's thoughtlessness, his banality, have had something to do with the evil he worked? The critical reviewer, then, has a problem: Are the faults in Arendt's work inherent in her approach or the consequence of its unfinished character? So where I am negative in what follows I will adopt that stance provisionally, tentatively.

Arendt's point of departure is the crisis in philosophy. For the Greeks, philosophy began with a sense of wonder at the very existence, the complex harmony, of the cosmos. For Schelling, whose personal career was to refract the modern crisis in a particularly dramatic way, God was the only answer to the question, Why is there not nothing? But for Sartre—in this case, Sartre, the novelist—the most fundamental of intuitions is a sense of nausea in the presence of "the naked thereness of the factually given."

"In this progressive shift from being to nothingness," Arendt comments, "caused not by the loss of wonder or perplexity but by the loss of admiration and willingness to affirm in thought, it would be very tempting to see the end of philosophy, at least of that philosophy whose beginning Plato had fixed." And she quotes a marvelous line of Heidegger's: ". . . the novelty of our contemporary position in philosophy lies in the conviction, which no era had before us, that we do not possess the truth. All previous generations 'possessed the truth,' even the skeptics."

And it might seem, particularly at the outset of *Thinking*, that Arendt has indeed surrendered to the naysaying which she describes. She dismisses all theories in which "mere" appearance is the emanation or projection or creature of an invisible ground (God, Matter, Spirit). That notion, Arendt says, corresponds to a profound human experience, e.g., when we know that our show of courage masks the reality of the fear we feel and thus distinguish the outer and inauthentic from the inner and authentic. But as a theory, the myth of "two worlds," of appearance and essence, is only a myth. So one must recognize the "phenomenal nature of the world," the "value of the surface." "Being and Appearing coincide," Arendt writes and then concludes, in a man-

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ner reminiscent of Fichte, that "nothing and nobody exists in this world whose being does not presuppose a spectator."

This does not, however, mean that Arendt believes the "two world" myth is simply to be forgotten. Precisely because a science-dominated culture has given up metaphysics, the invisible is in "bad repute" and the richness of our past is in danger of being treated as obsolete. This is one reason why it is important to think about thinking, for it is precisely that very real and important activity which the two world view mythologized. As Hegel so brilliantly understood, all serious falsehoods are partial truths, and Arendt is concerned to preserve what is vital in that metaphysical tradition whose death she records.

Thought is that vital core. It "permits the mind to withdraw from the world without ever being able to leave it or transcend it." And, she continues in another striking passage, "in the proverbial absentmindedness of the philosopher, everthing present is absent because something actually absent is present to his mind, and among the things absent are the philosopher's body." But this remarkable power is also problematic. Thought is self-destructive, turning on its own results; and it is evanescent. Moreover, and here Arendt obviously turns back to Kant, thought is often concerned with meaning, which is much more difficult to categorize than truth. Truth is factual, the domain of science, the product of the intellect (which is how Arendt translates Kant's *Verstand*); meaning is the goal of reason and it concerns ideas and values which cannot be demonstrated empirically.

That distinction has, of course, a long history. Ever since philosophers in the Nineteenth century realized that natural scientists were crowding them out of much of their traditional turf, they have insisted—rightly, I think—that there is a significant area of human experience which cannot be reduced to equations or dealt with in terms of empirical uniformities. John Stuart Mill argued that such

matters were the sphere of the "moral sciences" and the Germans translated that phrase, rather poetically, as "Geisteswissenschaften," the sciences of the spirit. But how be precise about something so imprecise? The most radical answer was given by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*: "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence." Arendt, like the later Wittgenstein, does not go that far; but she does necessarily circle around her subject matter, insisting upon the importance of metaphor, analogy and emblems—the techniques of literature and intuition rather than those of natural science.

How do these reflections on thinking relate to Arendt's second major theme, willing? On the one hand, both activities are implicated in the same crisis. Will, Arendt argues, is a faculty discovered by the Christians (the Incarnation having shattered the ancient cyclic inevitabilities). It troubles many philosophers because its alternative possibilities burst all neat schemas. The professional thinkers, she holds, "have been unwilling to pay the price of contingency for the questionable gift of spontaneity." And yet, the modern age, with its restless futurism, made it impossible to ignore those contingencies.

Enter that quintessential postmodern of the last century, Frederich Nietzche. "He embarked on a construction of the given world that would make sense, be a fitting abode for a creature whose 'strength of will [is great enough] to do without meaning in things . . . [who] can endure to live in a meaningless world.' Eternal Recurrence is the term for this final redeeming thought inasmuch as it proclaims the 'Innocence of all beaimlessness and purposelessness, its freedom from guilt and responsibility." But where does that leave us? More specifically, where does it leave a culture? An extraordinary genius like Nietzsche might be able to dwell heroically in the midst of a chaotic imminence, but what of you and me?

In so far as Arendt answers that question it is by way of a kind of stoicism. She turns to Heidegger—who was as important to her as Kant—and sees life as "the lingering between two absences and a sojourn in the realm of errancy." Yet this is not said sadly, and indeed it contains an affirmative strain, a Greek sense of "wonder" in the presence of being. On two occasions, Arendt quotes a marvelous remark of Einstein's: "The eternal mystery of the world i.e., the universe is its comprehensibility."

These, in briefest outline, are some of the major concerns of *Thinking* and *Willing*. It is, as I remarked at the outset, most welcome to have such matters discussed before the general public. That said, I am bothered by a certain passivity, an excessively contemplative and removed mood, in Arendt's books. Hegel, too, said that being and appearing, essence and accidents, were ultimately the same. Therefore the understood world was identical with the un-understood world; the only change took place in our mind. So it was that Marx accused the great idealist of being a "false positivist." Arendt shares in that positivism.

Indeed it is quite significant that her philosophic geneology omits the activist tradition which arose within the German Classical Philosophy with Marx. For her, the modern experience is conditioned primarily, almost exclusively, by the sense of contingency

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inherent in capitalist industrialization. But there is practically no mention of the contrary experience which has played at least as important a role in our culture: the impact of the increasing human control of external nature, an ambiguous but unmistakable part of our lives. Given that perspective, it is no accident that she talks of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche but not Marx. Indeed, it was one of Arendt's great scholarly limitations that she was systematically unfair to Marx (the discussion of his concept of work in *The Human Condition* bordered on the scandalous).

I do not raise this point out of the sectarian concern of a democratic Marxist. More fundamentally, I think it unfortunate that Arendt in *Thinking* dismisses the concept of *praxis*—of action to change the world based upon theory and values—in an inaccurate aside. It would, of course, be foolish even to intimate that there is some easy plan for human salvation which only has to be willed into existence. That superficial messianism has no place in any serious discussion. But must thought be merely poignant and will merely personal? Is there at least the possibility—fallible, battered, but better than any other—of changing, as well as understanding, the world? I think so. Arendt, it seems to me, does not.

This criticism even has its ironic aspect. Recent serious developments of Marx's ideas—Karel Kosik's, for instance—make a united front with the phenomenologists in rejecting the "two world" theory of essence and accidents. On this count, both the Marxists and the phenomenologists, like Arendt, derive from Hegel's understanding that "essence" and "appearance" interpenetrate one another, that they do not form two separate realms. But the Marxists then go on to analyze that interpenetration historically, in terms of human activity, and they suggest that the world can be transformed by an activism which understands and an understanding which is active. Arendt cuts herself off from this rich concept of the relation between thinking and willing, which is a pity and an irony since many of its analyses border on her own.

I do not want to end on such a negative note. Hannah Arendt had a dangerous and daring habit of the most sweeping generalizations. When she makes them in the area of my own specialization, I am often uneasy —as are other specialists in other fields with whom I have talked. And yet there are sentences, paragraphs, insights and quotations which are so exciting that if I am unsatisfied with the whole, if I disagree on some rather basic issues, I nonetheless leave these books with the sense of having encountered a challenging intellect. More to the point, they make me think, they provoke the life of my mind. Which was Arendt's ultimate, laudable point.

Journal of Rehearsals

WALLACE FOWLIE

Duke, $12.75 [219 pp.]

DAVID O'CONNELL

Wallace Fowlie, James B. Duke Professor of French at Duke University, is nearing the age of seventy and will soon retire. Over the years, teaching at Harvard, Bennington, Chicago, Yale and Duke, he has made many friends and trained what must be a rather larger number of Ph.D. candidates. For this reason, the inevitable *Festschrift*, i.e., the memorial volume of essays dedicated to a great scholar's memory, usually including an analytical bibliography of his life's work, will most likely be appearing before too long. But such publications tend to be somewhat uneven, and often quite boring, since the contributions usually have only one thing in common—the relationship of the contributors to the remembered teacher and scholar. Their current interests are usually quite disparate and thus the *Festschrift* (American professors seem to have a special fondness for the word, its frequency of use varying inversely with one's knowledge of German) is usually of interest and value to an individual subscriber solely for the bibliography it contains. For this reason, Duke University Press has wisely decided to honor Wallace Fowlie in a special way on his retirement by publishing his intellectual autobiography. *Journal of Rehearsals*, gleaned from his daily writings over almost fifty years, records for us the pilgrimage through time and space of a leading academic intellectual who is also a Christian.

Born in Brookline, Massachusetts and educated at Brookline High School and at Harvard, where he took his B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. degrees, Fowlie has written over twenty books and scores of articles on French literary subjects, and has published at least a dozen book-length translations of works ranging from Molière to Claudel, Mauriac and Saint-John Perse. At a time when standards of scholarly performance have dropped, and with hundreds of full professorships at major universities occupied by non-scholars, this is an especially impressive achievement. For Fowlie, raised a Baptist, but converted to Catholicism, the road to Rome seems in retrospect, to this reader at least, to have been clearly marked out for him through the people he met. While in Paris in the early thirties to begin writing his doctoral dissertation on an arcane subject, he made the acquaintance by chance of a Mme Faure, the widow of the little-known novelist, Ernest Psichari, who had been converted to Catholicism shortly before World War I and who died on the battlefield during the first weeks of the war. Psichari, whom Maritain later described to Fowlie as "a pure example of God's entrance into a human being," became the subject of Fowlie's doctoral thesis at Harvard and through him and his experience of conversion, Fowlie himself was to find his way to Catholicism.

Fowlie has been at Duke since 1965, but during two earlier periods of his life, from 1935 to 1941, and from 1950 to 1962, he taught at Bennington College, and it was during one of these periods—he does not specify which one—that he was baptized in

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the small local French-language church. An un-named woman of the parish was his godmother on the occasion, but there was no godfather present. Thus, later on, he asked Maritain if he would accept the responsibility, and when the latter agreed, his name was entered retrospectively on the baptismal papers in Bennington's Sacré-Coeur church. For Fowlie the association is not fortuitous, for his autobiography is remarkable not only for the kinds of people he has met, and on whose work he has written or whose friendship he has treasured, but also for those names that are absent. Given his mystical sensitivity to grace and to the divine presence of daily life, he shows no interest in an atheist like Céline, or in existentialists like Sartre, Camus or Simone de Beauvoir. On the contrary, from the day, while he was still in high school, when he heard Paul Claudel lecture in Boston, through his associations with the family of Ernest Psichari, and his friendship with Maritain, the Catholic connection has been constant. And even in his books on Gide, Baudelaire and Rimbaud, the sense of spiritual quest is a dominant motif.

There are a number of mystical experiences alluded to in the book, although Fowlie discreetly avoids revealing too much of himself. One incident of particular interest, however, took place while Fowlie and T. S. Eliot were serving Mass together one morning in the thirties at the Anglo-Catholic chapel in Cambridge. Suddenly, after Communion, Eliot fell to floor, face down, arms outstretched, in a mystical encounter with God. But what is so disarming about Fowlie is that he talks of such experiences, as well as of his own deep convictions about the necessity for spiritual values in art and literature, without the slightest evidence of concern that in the academy these days such a tolerant and open viewpoint toward the spiritual is hardly widespread.

Fowlie is one of the truly great American scholar/teachers of French in this century, yet his reputation is considered by some to be simply that of a fellow who writes "easy" books designed primarily for an undergraduate audience. This analysis is partially correct (his famous *A Reading of Proust* is the best introductory book in any language on Proust and his novel), but it is also based on incomplete data (his books on Psichari, Gide, Rimbaud and Lautréamont are original and solid by any criterion). But what is masked by the polite but faint praise that Fowlie's name often provokes from colleagues in the academy is the reaction that any man of staunch moral conviction who is also prolific arouses in an age of confusion and mediocrity.

For Fowlie is like those artisans of the Ile de France who labored incessantly for over a century to create the great Notre Dame cathedral. He works with discipline and his labor is guided by the light of faith. He has avoided fads—like the "existentialist" fad that ran through modern language and English departments in the fifties and sixties, and the "structuralist" fad that we are enduring today—in order to explicate authors whom he takes to be significant and whose work will have enduring value. In this he leaves himself vulnerable to the criticism of the academic mods who, having turned their backs on the real world, write more and more books and articles each year not on literature but on other critics.

A superb lecturer and a legendary teacher, if one is to believe those who have studied with him, Fowlie through his many books has done with taste and zest what every scholar should ideally do: teach those, students and colleagues alike, who are beyond the reach of his own classroom. As he puts it himself, his life has been devoted to "daily progress in thought, writing and spirituality," and we should be grateful to him for sharing with us the major landmarks and experiences of his pilgrimage.

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A State of Blood

HENRY KYEMBA

Ace $2.50 [288 pp.]

Idi Amin Dada: Hitler in Africa

THOMAS & MARGARET MELADY

Sheed Andrews & McMeel, $7.95 [184 pp.]

Idi Amin: Death-Light of Africa

DAVID GYN

Little Brown, $8.95 [240 pp.]

WILLIAM P. WOOD

Idi Amin Dada, who declared himself "a man of few words" in 1971, has become the subject of a word flood in fact and fiction. At least three of these recent books are attempts to express the inexpressible, to sum up the outrage of Amin's actions. Like Eichmann on a tour of a killing ground near Lemberg, there is a real danger of being rendered speechless by the fountain of blood gushing from the earth.

For fifteen years, from Uganda's independence to his flight from the country in the spring of 1977, Henry Kyemba worked at the highest echelons of government. From 1971 to 1977 he served in the Cabinet of Idi Amin and from that perspective has written his account of the savagery in today's Uganda.

A State of Blood is neither com-

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pletely history nor personal memoir, but an amalgam of the two like the Meladys' book. Uniquely positioned to view the decline of his country under Amin's dictatorship, Mr. Kyemba, with a greater intimacy of detail than either of the other Amin accounts, has filled out the contours of atrocities only vaguely chronicled in the Western press. He has described his own involvement, and Amin's, in the murder of Dora Bloch, who was left behind in a Ugandan hospital following the successful Israeli raid on the Entebbe airport. For this reason alone, Mr. Kyemba has performed a valuable service. He has handed the world a record.

Yet there are questions raised by all of these accounts which are disturbing and transcend both Amin and suffering Uganda. The grotesque figure who rules that nation is supported by various Arab states and Islamic groups. Even here in the United States a strange tacit support for Amin continues, administration criticism aside. In February 1977, for example, while he carried out the murder of two Cabinet ministers and the Anglican Archbishop of Uganda, Amin's personal jet was being serviced in America. It was revealed in the fall that Ugandan pilots were being trained in Texas to fly helicopters. And the United States remains the largest purchaser of Ugandan coffee, even though we embargoed Cuba for acts far less barbarous than those of Idi Amin.

Amin, as these accounts make clear, has no claim to support in his country based on ideology, because he has none; and his rhetoric for outside consumption plays cynically on racial pride. Amin, says Mr. Kyemba, does this to block attacks from black groups. And, in that regard, he has been reasonably successful. Several black organizations have expressed varying amounts of support for him, although others condemned him along with South Africa. The revamped Nation of Islam and Roy Innis of the Congress of Racial Equality once proposed sending black Americans to Uganda to take up the economic slack when Amin expelled the nation's Asians in 1972. Reports of mass murder and monstrous slaughter have circulated almost since Amin seized power, but trade continues with him and there is no clamorous denunciation of his regime. How can this happen?

These three accounts arrive at essentially the same answer to the question. Each is a persistent recounting of the malleability of moral principle and how evil can not only be easily supported, but flourish too. It pleases many nations, for money, religious reasons, even perversity, to buttress up Amin. Mr. Kyemba estimates that Uganda has an inflation rate of 400 percent today. Industry has almost been obliterated. Up to 200,000 people have been murdered in Uganda; we calculate this using the macabre measuring device of one boatman at Owens Falls pulling out twenty bodies a day from that watery burial ground since July 1971 and multiplying by two other similar mass graves. An antic bloodlust rampages unchecked in Uganda and Idi Amin, at the very least, should have been universally condemned a long time ago. He has not been.

Although the Organization of African Unity is embarrassed by Amin, it has never taken the step of denouncing him. It was not until June 1977 that any international body publicly condemned Idi Amin as the Commonwealth Conference did. Amin receives aid from many nations and a regular bi-weekly "whiskey run," as Mr. Kyemba calls it, of luxury goods from Britain shores up Amin's power more than any other single thing. With these goods he can keep his police and security forces paid extravagantly. The flights continue.

Henry Kyemba is the most intriguing figure in the three Amin accounts because he escaped from Uganda to write his story. He is an educated man, trained at Bugosa College and Makerere University, and he served as head of several ministries under Amin. He admits he knew a great deal about the deaths in Uganda. "Like Oryema and Oboth-Ofumbi," the two officials killed in February 1977, "I knew too much." This realization prompted his flight from Uganda in April. But this educated man, often shocked by what Amin ordered him to do, went on serving the dicator for five years.

Amin, admittedly, came to power in a burst of euphoria and celebration. His predecessor, Milton Obote, was widely reviled at the time he was overthrown. But this illusion of joy quickly gave way to horror as Amin's unpredictable murderousness appeared almost at once. Mr. Kyemba elected to remain in Uganda and government. "Knowing what I did about the nature of Amin's rule, why did I serve?," he muses. "I was not yet ready for the only alternative: flight." Later on he asks again, "was I not by my very presence sanctioning the terror?" He never does more than pose the question.

It is impossible, for that reason, to read Mr. Kyemba's account and not superimpose Hitler's brilliant technocrat Albert Speer. The stories of these educated, intelligent, capable men closely resemble each other. Amin once ordered Mr. Kyemba, while he was Minister of Health, to falsify the records at Kampala's Mulago Hospital of Dora Bloch. It was arranged to look as if Mrs. Bloch had just vanished rather than being dragged screaming from her room by two security soldiers. "I felt sickened by my actions," Mr. Kyemba confesses. He also made it possible for the dictator to be alone in the hospital mortuary with the corpses of prominent victims. Mr. Kyemba believes, as he told the press during the Commonwealth Conference, that these private visits were made for the purpose of performing ritual blood worship with the dead, but he set them up anyway. He was a perfect technocrat who had entered government service as a protocol officer adept at staging and arranging and he continued to act in the same way even when the things he was called on to arrange were part of a depraved carnival.

After the war, certain German officials claimed to have secretly opposed

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Hitler while carrying out his commands. These officials posited the notion of being "inner emigrants" who despised Hitler even as they obeyed him. Henry Kyemba engaged in just such an inner emigration, distancing his public role from the feelings he had inside himself about Amin to the point that he made no protest when Amin murdered his brother. Morally, of course, this odd concept is unacceptable, and legally it has no force whatsoever. At his trial, Gauleiter Arthur Greiser of Poland said only his "official soul" had carried out the executions of 15,000 people while his "private soul" had always been appalled by such actions. He was hanged, obviously, for the deeds of his "official soul," whatever internal qualms he may have habored notwithstanding.

The Meladys and Gywn have written different books. Thomas Melady, the last American ambassador to Uganda, could only look in from the outside, and see dimly the workings of Amin's furious anarchy. What Melady knew, and relates with direct horror, is the murder of close friends, people of intelligence and talent who would have helped build Uganda. Melady's wife saw Lake Victoria for the last time in 1973 as her plane circled over it, carrying the rest of the family back to the United States. Her husband had already been recalled. She looked down and realized that the mutilated body of an old friend, one who had introduced her to her husband, may have been dumped "like a sack of garbage" into the swampy lake. It is, finally, the clearest impression of Amin that an American could have.

What this outpouring of interest in Amin has done is to elevate him to grand heights. He is compared to Hitler. He is evil without redemption. He reveals how frail even intelligence and civilization can be when confronted by such evil. And while they detail the Amin years, the murders, the betrayals, the suffering and insanity, the commentators on Amin have raised him to a moral example, fearsome, enormous, and vexing. For here, as precisely set down in these books, is a figure entirely devoid of humanity, one bloated with murder and brutality, still ruling, still supported and aided, still playing on the world's stage, served by greedy men and good men, proving each day that there is no evil too great to be tolerated.

The Shroud of Turin: The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ?

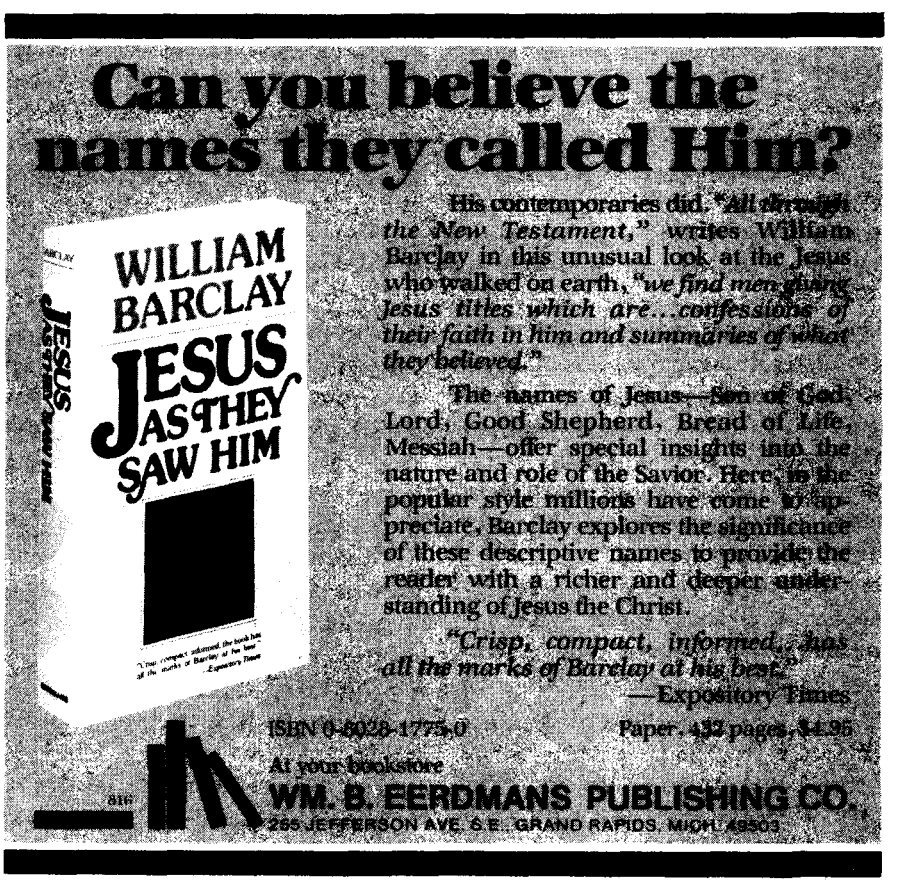
IAN WILSON

Doubleday, $10 [272 pp.]

NORRIS MERCHANT

The age of relics often seems to have passed. Their advocacy has become less than plausible after Vatican II, and perhaps the Middle Ages would be astonished at our speed in disposing of many of them or at the casualness with which innumerable altars once housing precious or sacral remnants of hallowed beings in perpetual memorial have themselves been transformed into less awesomely problematic tables. But the so-called "Shroud of Turin" is an outstanding exception. Not only has it maintained itself in an atmosphere of formidable desacralization of old, purportedly holy objects and emblems, but scientists in several countries have given it their attention, apparently regarding the unraveling of its secret a worthy enterprise. One such group organized the first U.S. Conference of Research on the Shroud, held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in March, 1977.

Ian Wilson's *The Holy Shroud of Turin* helps us to understand these as yet not fully explainable anomalies. Mr. Wilson, an Oxford history graduate, might justifiably be called a convert of the shroud. His original mentor, the late Dr. David Willis, was once head of the British Society for the Turin Shroud and it was through him that the then-agnostic Mr. Wilson, having become convinced of the shroud's authenticity, entered the Catholic Church. His book attempts to follow the shroud's long itinerary over an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often dark continent of Christian history.

At the turn of the century the shroud enjoyed the distinction among relics of having been attacked by priests (Father Harold Thurston and Canon Ulysse Chevalier) and defended by scientists (biologist Paul Vignon and Dr. Yves Delage, an agnostic professor of comparative anatomy at the Sorbonne). Photography had just become the first modern investigative technique to lend respectability to the shroud as some kind of marvelous "phenomenon" even if that were not precisely what it had for centuries been purported to be. Debunking clerics like Chevalier might have supposed fraudulent misrepresentation in the concocting of the shroud, but the ever more discerning camera eye revealed a striking "new" negative image that had reposed for centuries in the linen, awaiting the camera's invention to unveil it. That detailed negative showed with a disturbing clarity only partially suggested before then the image of an impressively shaped human body bearing in precise detail the stigmata recorded as Christ's in the Gospels. But how was the image impressed on the cloth? And if fakery was to be assumed, by what process could the shroud have been prepared, that would ultimately require negative photography to disclose its—so far unimitable—luxury of eerie detail? These are questions which in our time have increasingly engaged the interest of radiologists, blood analysts, chemists, textile specialists, computer scientists, and even criminologists, and which caused two U.S. Air Force Academy physicists to assemble that first American scientific conference on the shroud. (All important carbon-14 testing to determine the relative date of the shroud's origin has been postponed chiefly because destruction of a considerable portion of its material would be involved to provide testing samples.)

So far of course their studies are inconclusive, but it is just that factor which challenges further probing of the relic's elusive reality. Why can't we prove it definitively an absurd anachronism or at least a painted hoax? It is hard to imagine the multiple relics of the True Cross (enough to build a battleship?) sneered at by Erasmus or the Crown of Thorns (one of many in medieval circulation) for which King St. Louis IX built the Sainte Chapelle resisting for so long and ever more brilliantly the relentless positivist zeal of a technical civilization to catalog and thus perfectly define and dismiss the mana-powered object.

Yet it is in his *historical* imagination, in reconstructing the shroud's obscure background, that Mr. Wilson in this new study has shown himself most original, even audacious. As it is, the shroud is known to have been exhibited in its present home, the Turin Cathedral, since 1578. Before that, and before coming under the patronage of the House of Savoy, it was certainly exhibited (the first sure exhibition was in 1357) in France by the family of Geoffrey de Charny, who was French standard bearer at the Battle of Poitiers, in 1356. But before this?

It is here that Mr. Wilson's thesis takes on the character of a tantalizing evocation of historical mysteries every bit as uncertain (as of now) as the shroud they are concerned with. His account leads us from the Palestine of Jesus to Edessa, where one of "the seventy," early followers of Christ, Thaddeus, allegedly brought an enigmatic "portrait" with curative properties. Later, after centuries hidden away from persecutors in Edessa, the portrait was rediscovered, to become the famous "Mandylion" of Byzantine Christianity —an image of Christ's face on cloth, procured in 944 by Constantinople and venerated *there*, until becoming lost sight of in the Fourth Crusade. (In the context of his discussion Mr. Wilson disposes of the Veronica legend as ultimately derived from a fabled origin attributed to one of the copies of the Mandylion—the *vera icon*.) The "Mandylion," then, which suddenly disappeared from history after the Venetian sacking of Constantinople in 1204, was perhaps in fact the "Shroud of Turin" known to us today—but rolled up, with only the holy face exposed in those days for public viewing.

And what of the years just after its disappearance from Constantinople, and before it entered the light in the late 14th century? Mr. Wilson disingenuously delivers a bomb at the door of historians of the Knights Templar. The Mandylion-Shroud, he avers, seems to have been the celebrated image so secretly and so exorbitantly venerated by the Templars that, along with other infamies and heresies imputed to them by the jealous and the avaricious, it contributed to the Templars' ruin and extermination.

The shroud as cynosure of veneration to the Templars (accused of worshipping "Baphomet," and worse) would in fact constitute grim paradox, and even the suggestion of it already partakes of a species of Calvary-like sublimity. Mr. Wilson presents such ideas with bits of supportive detail, and just enough circumstantial evidence, to make him no doubt among the brightest and most stimulating modern Templars of that redoubtable shroud, stamped as it is with a timelessly significant image, *whatever* its origin.

The City Builder

GEORGE KONRAD

Harcourt, Brace, $7.95 [184 pp.]

RONALD DE FEO

I think it is fairly safe to say that some of today's most interesting and stimulating fiction has come to us from Latin America and Eastern Europe. Both of these areas have produced writers of striking originality, energy and sophistication who are not only superior stylists but also gifted fantasists and surrealists, able to gracefully transform the ordinary into the extraordinary. Yet despite a strong similarity in method and spirit, their works seem to differ quite a bit in focus and direction, and above all in the atmosphere, the worlds that they create. Broadly speaking, the Latin Americans elevate their material to the mythic level. Even so-called common, down-to-earth people—the kind we find, say, in García Márquez's *No One Writes*

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to the Colonel, Rulfo's *The Burning Plain* and Vargas Llosa's *Conversations in the Cathedral*—become after a while the stuff of legend. They may at first appear "small," but eventually they grow larger than life.

By comparison, East European fiction seems more concerned with the person, the individual than with "the people." We find here a decidedly inward turn. The characters are more introspective, wall-bound and oppressed. They seen to exist not so much in a world as in a series of rooms, and the reader is made to share their claustrophobia. Kafka haunts this literature (as do the war and the Holocaust). When we think of his work we recall shadowy little rooms, cells for living, and we see such rooms again in the fiction of Konrád and in the (rediscovered) work of Bruno Schulz and to some extent in that of Gombrowicz, Kundera and Vaculík. At times we not only sense the oppression of the characters, but of their creators as well. For to avoid censorship they cloak their fiction in symbols and metaphors. Their messages come to us in code. Under the circumstances it is not surprising that much of their work is dark and closed. Yet its grimness is often relieved (mercifully) by humor, not the wry or hearty brand we find in many of the Latin Americans, but a more perverse, off-center variety, a Kafka-like laughter in the dark.

However, there is little of even this sort of laughter in the work of George Konrád, a Hungarian writer, essayist and sociologist, who in recent years has emerged as a major figure in East European literature. In fact, if there were any sustained laughter at all we suspect that it would be hysterical in nature, a howl at the steady stream of misery, horror and chaos that is recorded, the kind of cry released by Tod Hackett at the end of Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust*. Though not a politically conscious writer like Konrad, West, perhaps more than any other author, comes to mind when we are reading Konrad's earlier novel, *The Caseworker*. The social worker, whose intense monologue comprises the book, eventually becomes overwhelmed by the human suffering and wreckage he must confront day after day, just as Miss Lonelyhearts, an advice-to-the-lovelorn columnist, becomes overwhelmed by all of the pathetic and tragic mail he receives daily. Both of these protagonists are weighed down by guilt because their attempts to deal with the ills of society, with the miseries of existence in general have been so half-hearted and inadequate. Both of them finally establish an intimate relationship with a suffering soul, Miss Lonelyhearts with the wife of an impotent cripple and the caseworker with a hopelessly retarded child.

Though the two books are very similar, Konrád's cuts deeper, is more detailed and possesses a stylistic and thematic density that West's novel lacks. Of course, Konrád has much more on his mind, for he wishes not only to depict the hell of existence but

In Prospect

Among the features scheduled to appear in *Commonweal* in coming weeks are thoughtful articles by such contributors as: Lawrence S. Cunningham, Adrian Hastings, Peter Walshe, Brian Wicker, Peter Kovler and Alan Paton. With others they will provide a wide range of insights on questions of the day.

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also to record the vain efforts made by the modern state to alleviate that hell. As society becomes increasingly complex and social problems multiply, the bureaus established to handle those problems and impose some order become impossibly complex and unmanageable themselves. To drive home his themes, Konrád really does rub our faces in the dirt and disorder, and for all the brilliant writing, the wonderful details and observations, the pyrotechnical feats and the vivid nightmarish scenes, his book eventually wearies the reader by its unrelieved grimness and sameness of tone. To some extent, I suppose, Konrád intends to weary us so that we can share the caseworker's perspective and frustration. But a little of the kind of wit employed by West in *Miss Lonelyhearts* would have been very welcome.

In *The City Builder*, Konrád's latest novel, the author is again concerned, at least in part, with the state's attempt to order society. Cast in the first person, it is told from the point of view of a city-planner who has been searching, in vain, for the ideal plan. For no matter how much power he and the other, more power-hungry, dictatorial planners exert, and no matter what form of socialism is imposed, society and its complexities as well as the mysterious workings of chance defeat the best of plans. Though the novel is filled with tirades against technology and allusions to modern Hungarian history, it does go beyond the purely social and political dimension. Konrád uses the city as a metaphor not only for society, but for the individual as well, and we often find his planner trying to put his life and his past in perspective, in much the same way as he has tried to do with the life history of the city.

Whereas *The Caseworker* was specific, illuminating a particular segment of society, an underground world, *The City Builder* takes an overall view, analyzing society in general. This approach, however, creates problems for the reader. We sometimes feel that Konrád is attempting to do too much, to cover too much ground. The book seems to have no center. We miss the details that made *The Caseworker* so vivid, and above all, we miss the people. *The City Builder* is really more of an essay than a novel, a sort of extended fictional meditation, so it would be unfair to evaluate it by applying traditional standards. Yet taken purely on its own terms the book still has problems. The constant shifting from the concrete to the abstract becomes irritating, for just when the reader is settling on firm ground he is yanked away. The author tempts him with some details (about the city builder's family, for instance, or his imprisonment during the war) and then frustrates him by slipping back into abstractions and generalities. Konrád's rhetoric works against him here. His language is so studied and inflated that at times it is simply impenetrable. Similar difficulties confronted the reader of Juan Goytisolo's recent work, *Count Julian* and *Juan the Landless*, which, like Konrád's book, were cast as meditations, but here the reader was carried on by the tension created by Goytisolo's fiery spirit and savage wit. That sense of tension, of a steady build-up is noticeably lacking in *The City Builder*.

Still, the book is well worth reading for its intelligence and insights, and *The Caseworker*, despite its excessive weightiness, should not be missed. George Konrád hardly possesses a light touch, but his intellectual integrity and his ability to stimulate the reader to think and argue compensates for the general heaviness of his approach.

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IN BRIEF

WITNESSING: THE SEVENTIES *by Sidney Bernard, Horizon,* $12.95 [232 pp.]

Sidney Bernard begins one of the essays in his collection, *Witnessing: The Seventies*, by suggesting that there is a need to define the past, for in so doing, no cultural, social, or political movement can ever appear wholly new and without precedent. The essays in this volume, written between Christmas Day 1969 and Easter 1977, represent Bernard's own attempt to define the past—a very recent past—in a set of impressionistic sketches whose subjects range from American politics to theater and film to the New York social and literary scenes.

That the spirit of the sixties is not the spirit of the seventies is clear; the commitment and activism that flourished not too long ago seems to have been replaced by a conformity and a complacency that is, perhaps, a sign of contentment, but that is more likely a result of the displacement of issues that demanded a largely emotional reaction—issues like Vietnam, Civil Rights, and even, in its way, the race to the moon—by issues like energy and conservation and the economy, issues which are certainly important but which require more of an intellectual commitment than an emotional one. Bernard wisely avoids the task of defining precisely when this shift in national spirit took place; he resists the temptation of suggesting that the sixties ended with Attica, or with Kent State, or with McGovern's defeat, or with Watergate. Instead, the change is reflected by the content of Bernard's essays: the number of cultural articles increases each year from 1969 to 1977 while the number of political articles declines, so that by the time Watergate erupts, it is mentioned only in the context of some remarks made by Heinrich Böll at a press conference, and there is no comment about Jimmy Carter at all. The essays become increasingly introspective, more personal than political, more poignant than critical.

I have reservations about Bernard's style and his book. The style, I think, is pretentiously "hip," as if the author considers himself another pseudo-Tom Wolfe-Hot-Shot-Journalist. He plays loose with the English language, using nouns for verbs (for example, "I second-acted the set," when he apparently means that he missed the first part of the Stokowski concert he is writing about); and he trivializes important events (Most of the article entitled "We Are All Part of Attica"

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has to do with his inability to get a press pass to screenings at the New York Film Festival).

It is a problem with even the best of the new journalism that the author's personality can emerge so strongly as to dwarf the significance of the events about which he writes. Nevertheless, Bernard's candor about himself, about the people he encounters and the places he visits, makes *Witnessing: The Seventies* a unique chronicle of individual experience that helps to identify the elusive spirit of the decade.

DENNIS VELLUCCI

CORRESPONDENCE

(*Continued from page 547*)

intern informing the Chief of Surgeons how to operate on the head and the heart of the Mystical Body.

(REV.) MARCIAN DOYLE, O.F.M.

Southfield, Mich.

To the Editors: Ten years ago when the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* was published, I was shocked at the limited understanding of some theologians concerning the available philosophical defenses of the papal teaching on artificial birth control. They seemed to think that this teaching is necessarily bound up with the "physicalism" that Fr. Curran decries [July 7], and apparently Fr. Curran has not learned otherwise with the passage of 10 years. In my seminary training back in the early forties, we were introduced to such authors as Herbert Doms and Dietrich von Hildebrand. From the published writings of von Hildebrand it is pellucid that his entire treatment of Ethics in general and marriage in particular is all in terms of values. "Physicalism" is explicitly rejected. But it is precisely his concentration on personalist values that leads this highly gifted thinker to a strong complete agreement with the Catholic teaching on artificial birth control. Until Fr. Curran honestly faces his opposition, his integrity as a scholar is to be highly questioned.

(REV.) ROY EFFLER, O.F.M.
Duns Scotus College

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: The article by Rev. Charles Curran, "Reflections on *Humanae Vitae*"[July 7] was excellent. It exemplifies the theologian at his best. He clarifies thought, connects us with the experience and life of the Christian community and opens the way to future thought and action.

(REV.) H. C. MULHOLLAND

Ann Arbor, Mich.

To the Editors: I had thought there couldn't be anything else to read about *Humanae Vitae* after ten years had passed (ho-hum!). I enjoyed C. Curran's piece [July 7] in spite of myself, especially the reference to D. Maguire and his insistence that "magisterium" has a plural.

That reminded me of the old joke about how most of the blessed in heaven have to celebrate quietly so as not to disturb the Catholics who are also in that state. It's said, in this version, that the Catholics think they are the only ones there!

I have had to explain the humor in this little anecdote every time one of our children came into a maturity sufficient enough to realize that another point of view is sometimes where civilized conversation leads us. It seems to me that civilized conversation could also be a function of the teaching office of the church. Could be the magisteria have something to learn from the mouths of babes.

ANNE R. LAURANCE

Doubting Thomists

Rehoboth Beach, Del.

To the Editors: Reference is made to John Deedy's statement in "The Changing Scene" [News & Views, July 7]. There it is said that the three named deceased "neo-thomists" (Pegis, Pollock and O'Meara) were "intimate disciples of . . . Jacques Maritain." I knew the first and third men and their work very well, over a period of some 30 years. Pegis was a disciple of the Thomist, Etienne Gilson, not of Jacques Maritain. O'Meara was indeed "an authority on Duns Scotus," as Deedy says. To my knowledge, O'Meara did not consider himself a "neo-Thomist" or any kind of Thomist, still less (if possible) a Maritain disciple.

JAMES F. ANDERSON

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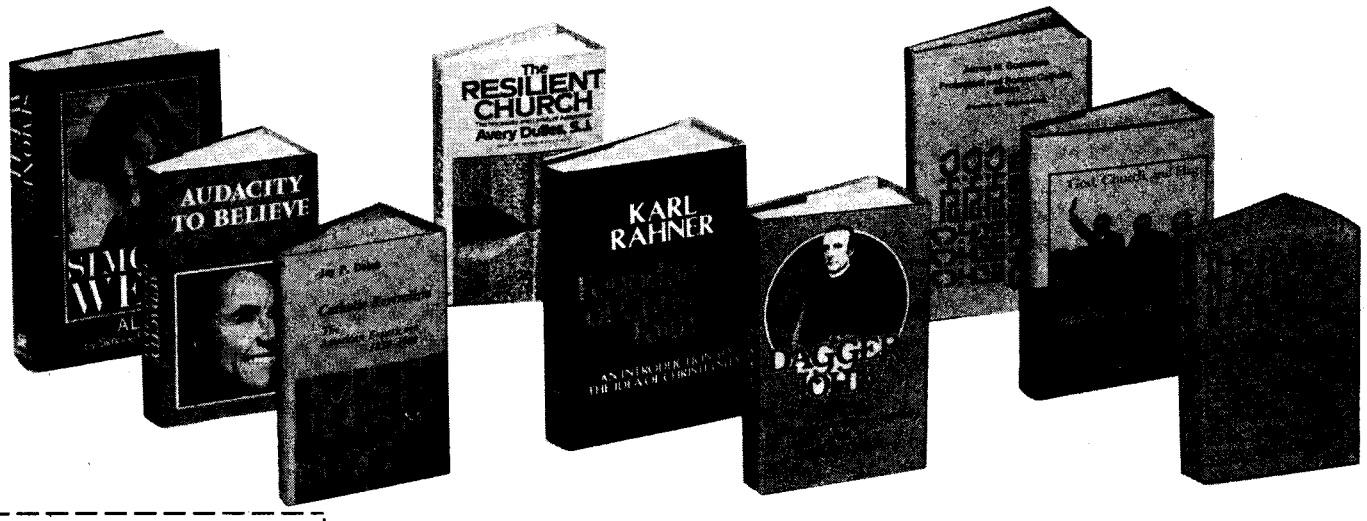

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